United Nations S/PV.6158

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6158th meeting

Thursday, 9 July 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Rugunda	(Uganda)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-39851 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Somalia and Sweden, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Duale (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Lidén (Sweden) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation to Her Excellency Mrs. Lila Hanitra Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in the consideration of the item in accordance with rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe and Ms. Susana Malcorra. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: We meet here today at a critical time for Somalia. The situation in the country, particularly in Mogadishu, remains very fragile. While there have been some solid successes in consolidating the Government, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) continues to face intense pressure from insurgent forces, backed by foreign fighters, who seek to seize power. As the Secretary-General has reiterated on several occasions, it is time for action on Somalia. The choice before us is a stark one. Either we help the Somali people overcome the current attempt to thwart efforts towards peace or we allow the new unity Government based on consensus and the Djibouti accords to fall to a radical armed opposition.

Despite numerous challenges, the TFG, under the leadership of President Sharif, has achieved some notable accomplishments during its first six months in office. The Government strives to maintain cohesion despite the obvious difficulties faced by any government of national unity.

The TFG has maintained an open-door policy to those outside the Djibouti process by reaching out to opposition forces and working to broaden its base of support among community, religious and civil society leaders. The Prime Minister has recently signed a broad-based agreement with Ahlu Sunnah Waljama'a, one of the major religious opposition groups in central Somalia. This agreement, covering political, security, humanitarian and development issues, was negotiated within the spirit of Djibouti and underscores the Government's determination to invite all groups to join in the rebuilding of Somalia. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ould Abdallah, continues to work with the Government and all opposition groups to facilitate dialogue in an effort to make the peace process more inclusive.

The Government has attempted to win the hearts and minds of the Somali people and to project a moderate vision of Islam that is in keeping with Somali culture. The recent pronouncements by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed urging Somalis to reject violence and extremism have also been helpful in this regard. However, the Government will continue to require more support in its public information and

outreach programmes to ensure that this message is widely disseminated amongst the Somali populace.

By contrast, Al-Shabaab appears to have intensified its strategy of coercion and intimidation of the population, using targeted assassinations of clan elders and government officials and harsh punishments for seemingly minor offences. Recent examples of acts that have shocked many Somalis, who practice a very moderate form of their religion, include the decapitation of local community leaders and the dismemberment of youths for theft. Reports of resistance by local populations and community leaders to the presence of Al-Shabaab and foreign fighters will bolster the Government's efforts aimed at political mobilization.

Even in the midst of its fight for survival, the Government has put in place more transparent and accountable financial management measures. It has contracted the auditing firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers to assist with tracking and reporting on the use of funds. That should generate greater donor confidence — especially on the part of those who pledged in Brussels — by making the entire process more transparent. This is in addition to the tracking mechanism that has been put in place by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), with the support of the African Union, the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Government. The TFG has developed a budget based on revenues generated from Mogadishu seaport, which ensured initial payments of salaries for the police, security forces and parliamentarians residing in Mogadishu.

The role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in helping the TFG to resist this latest assault in Mogadishu has been pivotal, even while the mission has been operating in a very difficult and challenging security environment. In that regard, we would like to pay tribute to the Burundi and Uganda contingents of AMISOM for the commendable work they are undertaking in Somalia on behalf of the international community. We deeply appreciate the leadership provided by Major General Okello, Force Commander of AMISOM, who has demonstrated a high level of professionalism and commitment to peace in Somalia.

In Mogadishu in particular, the ongoing conflict between insurgent groups and Government forces has taken a severe toll on the civilian population, displacing more than 200,000 people since the start of the recent spate of fighting on 7 May 2009. Overall, the number of internally displaced persons in Somalia stands at 1.3 million. The humanitarian situation is being further exacerbated by the worsening drought in Somalia and throughout the region.

Increasing insecurity in the Jubas and Mogadishu, coupled with drought and food insecurity issues — including in the Gedo region, which borders Kenya — are cited as the main reasons for a noticeable increase in the number of arrivals in Dadaab camp, in Kenya. A total of 6,463 more refugees were registered in June. As of 5 July, the overall population at Dadaab stands at 284,306, an increase of 21 per cent since the beginning of 2009. The implications of that new influx for already congested facilities and for tense host communities competing for resources are severe.

In this challenging context, while the humanitarian needs for Somalia remain high, it is critical that Security Council members encourage donors to rapidly fund the consolidated appeal. At the end of June, only 44 per cent of the $984 million requested had been received, leaving a critical shortfall in the areas of health, water and sanitation and security.

In order to consolidate the political gains of the Djibouti accords, the Secretary-General has proposed — and the Council has endorsed — a four-track strategy, on political matters, security, recovery and combating piracy. On the political track, in addition to fostering national reconciliation and sustaining dialogue between the TFG and opposition groups, the United Nations, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has undertaken a series of discussions with the Government to identify key ministries whose capacities would need to be strengthened in the first phase.

Having identified possible funding from international financial institutions, UNPOS has made several visits to Mogadishu to reach agreement with the Cabinet and the Prime Minister on, among other things, the modalities of this capacity-building effort. Consultations also continue on the development of a constitution, including a future conference on the place of sharia law in the new constitution.

On the security track, UNPOS has reached an agreement with the TFG to use the Joint Security Committee as the principal mechanism for

coordination between the TFG and the international community on security matters. This would include the establishment and functioning of the national security force and the police force. The United Nations Development Programme continues to coordinate the training of Somali police in consultation with AMISOM. The payment of salaries for the trained police is ongoing, while bilateral partners are working on training national security forces. We continue working on an incremental approach towards the possible establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. That approach calls for expeditious assistance to the TFG in building its own security forces and institutions and the strengthening of AMISOM to reach its mandated strength of 8,000.

On the recovery track, the United Nations country team is initiating a series of projects to help Somalia move beyond the current emergency and to ensure that its people experience some benefit from the peace process. Those projects include increasing access to basic services, such as water, health and education; creating livelihoods through rapid employment generation; the rehabilitation of key infrastructure; and other rapid-impact recovery programmes.

Finally, on piracy, the United Nations appreciates the operations of the international maritime forces in their anti-piracy efforts. Following the May meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, the United Nations was requested to serve as the secretariat of the Contact Group and to establish a trust fund to address the legal and land-based dimensions of piracy. A plan of action has been developed with the United Nations country team to implement a series of activities that would provide alternative livelihoods and enhance law enforcement. The Secretary-General has dispatched his Legal Counsel, Ms. Patricia O'Brien, to Kenya to explore possible initiatives to combat piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia, including the development of a legal framework for combating piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

In our view, there are three key measures that we can take immediately to turn around the two decades of instability in Somalia. The first is to heed the call made by the African Union heads of State or Government in Sirte last week to express our full support for the Transitional Federal Government as the legitimate authority in Somalia and to honour the financial pledges made to support the Government during the Brussels conference in April. In order to enable the Government to enhance its legitimacy and broaden its base, we must invest in building the security institutions and improve its capacity to deliver public services and employment, which could have a positive impact on the hearts and minds of ordinary Somalis. Projects aimed at encouraging youth employment and enhancing the livelihood of ordinary Somalis need to be given priority. These are essential to wean Somalis away from conflict, including acts of piracy, which has been the major employer in Somalia for most of the past two decades.

Secondly, we need to build up AMISOM and provide it with the resources necessary to enable it to continue to support the TFG and the people of Somalia. As President Sharif recently stated, the TFG's immediate physical survival is very much dependent on a more robust AMISOM presence. We strongly urge Member States to support the strengthening of AMISOM's capacity and to enable it to reach its full authorized strength of 8,000. The United Nations is committed to providing support to AMISOM, as Under-Secretary-General Malcorra will discuss in her statement.

Thirdly, we must focus on promoting reconciliation while, at the same time, taking measures against armed groups and foreign elements that are undermining the reconciliation process. As the Secretary-General has said on many occasions, the Somali peace process is open to all groups that renounce violence and are willing to work with the Government. That is the message being sent by the TFG to all parties that remain outside the peace process. It will be important for regional actors to work to encourage the armed groups to work towards that end and towards peace in Somalia.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that national reconciliation must first begin with the Somalis, yet we are aware of the considerable investment that the international community has made in the future of Somalia. We must do what we can to preserve the gains achieved through the Djibouti Agreement. It is in the international community's interest to ensure not only that the TFG does not collapse, but that it thrives. Action now will avert the inevitable high price of going in at a later date if we are not successful. We believe that immediate and concerted action by the international community can help the Somali people turn a new page in their troubled history and create a

conducive environment for peace, stability and recovery.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Susana Malcorra.

Ms. Malcorra: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council once again on the progress made to strengthen the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia's security institutions. Security Council resolution 1863 (2009), adopted in January, endorsed the Secretary-General's proposed strategy for Somalia, consisting of a United Nations support package for AMISOM and the building of the capacity of the Somali security sector. That support is funded through a combination of voluntary contributions through United Nations trust funds, bilateral support for AMISOM and Somali security institutions and assessed contributions for the United Nations logistics support package. It is an integrated strategy that recognizes the importance of each of those components in strengthening peace and security in Somalia and was devised by the Secretary-General to support the political process, build security and stability in the country, promote humanitarian assistance and help recovery efforts in a manner that is responsive to the prevailing conditions on the ground.

The international community's commitment to peace and stability in Somalia was further expressed by the Council in its resolution 1872 (2009) which called on the Secretary-General to, among other activities, continue to provide logistical support to AMISOM through 31 January 2010.

The success of the Somalia donors conference held in Brussels on 23 April was evidenced by pledges totalling approximately well over $200 million. Currently, $15 million has been received by the United Nations trust fund for AMISOM. Specific discussions are under way with other donors, with the possibility of soon doubling the contributions to the trust fund.

The current military strength of AMISOM in Mogadishu stands at 4,274 troops comprising three battalions from Uganda and two battalions from Burundi. The African Union's continued efforts to bring the AMISOM force up to its full mandated strength of 8,000 troops, reinforced with maritime and air components, is critical to secure key installations and humanitarian supply lines in Mogadishu, including the airport, the seaport and other strategic locations.

Voluntary support for AMISOM remains an essential complement to the United Nations logistics support package. Those requirements include funding and in-kind support to meet troop payments and urgently needed contingent equipment. However, with the majority of pledged donor support to the African Union and troop-contributing countries to be provided bilaterally, effective coordination is critical if AMISOM is to be properly supported without gaps or duplication.

To date, the United Nations has not applied any of the funding available in the trust fund for support to AMISOM. This has been done as part of an effort to ensure that this funding is available to meet those requirements that will not be supported by major bilateral contributors. I urge all Member States and regional organizations, including the European Union and the League of Arab States, to redouble their efforts to expedite the disbursement of pledges and to work closely with the United Nations to ensure that the combined support for AMISOM can be identified and prioritized. On the ground, we are gathering momentum.

I would like to take this opportunity to brief the Council on key support achievements and specific actions taken to date. Of the initial funding of $72 million provided up to 30 June 2009 for United Nations logistical support to AMISOM, approximately 95 per cent was committed. With a focus on initial start-up equipment requirements, the available funding has been used to initiate the procurement of equipment and supplies for both direct support to AMISOM and necessary requirements of the new United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA).

Interim "life support" supplies for AMISOM continue to be provided by a Member State with its own vendor. The commercial supply arrangements of the United Nations, sourced to United Nations procurement and supply standards, are expected to come into effect in a phased manner beginning next month. In the meantime, the United Nations has enhanced AMISOM's existing supply arrangements where possible, including by providing additional rations, medical supplies, specialized equipment and field defence resources.

On rations, UNSOA has commenced the weekly delivery of combat ration packs to supplement AMISOM's current fresh food supplies and to raise the daily caloric count to United Nations standards. Over 6,500 ration packs have been airlifted into Mogadishu to date, with the objective of delivering 12,000 ration packs per week until the United Nations support package is fully implemented. Arrangements were also put in place to provide AMISOM with strategic reserves of rations to mitigate risks to AMISOM's supply chain. An initial United Nations rations contract is expected to be operational in August.

With regard to air support, in the light of the security conditions in Mogadishu, short-term arrangements for commercial MEDEVAC capacity have been enhanced. The Department of Field Support is working closely with the Department of Safety and Security to assess the feasibility of supply flights to AMISOM.

On the subject of fuel, a fuel contract is expected to be awarded in August.

Regarding sea freight, options for services — chartering a vessel or using a freight forwarding vendor — are being established to enable UNSOA to commence sea delivery services to Mogadishu in August.

Field defence stores, medical and pharmaceutical supplies and a mobile airfield lighting system have been deployed to Mogadishu. Training for those capacities is being conducted in Entebbe. Additional training requirements have been identified by AMISOM troop-contributors to operate specialized equipment for strategic communications systems, firefighting, first aid and trauma care and movement control and property management, which is also ongoing.

The ex-UNMEE — United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea — donation is now starting to be used. I can report that, following training in Entebbe, containers and prefabricated buildings are now being erected and that about 50 vehicles are also in use within the airport defensive area.

A remaining priority is the construction of a force headquarters and level II hospital in Mogadishu, to provide facilities for a United Nations presence in country and to allow AMISOM to expand from a military mission to an integrated civilian, police and military operation. The construction requirements have been released to vendors and a contract award is targeted for August.

Much of the required equipment mobilized to date has been sourced through the strategic deployment stocks located at our logistics base in Brindisi, highlighting the importance of the readiness of the United Nations to quickly respond to Security Council mandates. Although a number of critical items have already been moved by air, the first significant United Nations consignment of support assets, worth over $15 million, is expected to arrive in Mombasa this week. These assets will provide essential capabilities to AMISOM in Mogadishu. They include prefabricated buildings, medical equipment, workshops, sanitation systems, refrigeration units for food storage and armoured vehicles.

This consignment from Brindisi is being transported by a United Nations-chartered ship, and I wish to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the international maritime task force, especially Operation Atalanta, for the escort and security assistance that is being provided to our consignment.

We have recently received confirmation that the Government of Kenya has given its approval for UNSOA to establish a logistics support base in Mombasa. We welcome this development, which paves the way for immediate and long-term support and improved means of delivery.

The memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the African Union for the provision of support to the African Union Mission in Somalia, which establishes appropriate internal controls to ensure that all equipment and services provided by the United Nations are provided in a transparent manner, has been endorsed by the United Nations Controller and submitted to the African Union for final approval and signature. It includes payments and other support provided through the United Nations Trust Fund. We expect the memorandum will be signed by the African Union shortly.

Further funding of $139 million has recently been approved by the General Assembly for the start of the new budget period effective 1 July. Under existing plans, this level of funding effectively provides for logistics support operations to continue for approximately four months. The Assembly is scheduled

to consider funding for the full 2009-2010 budget cycle this October.

The start-up phase of any field operation, including logistics support for AMISOM, requires certainty of resources. Permit me to offer an observation here. This short-term approach to funding limits the field mission in undertaking longer-term strategic planning critical to its core objectives, has implications for procurement arrangements and can hamper efforts to attract experienced staff. Member States' support for stable, full-year funding will ensure that UNSOA can continue its operations in a manner more conducive to its fully meeting its mandate.

We continue to make systematic progress in the implementation of the support package to AMISOM. We are pleased to report our continued close partnership with the African Union in supporting the Somali peace process and our close cooperation with AMISOM on the ground in the delivery of the support package.

The establishment of UNSOA in the premises of the United Nations Office in Nairobi has been achieved. Recruitment of international and national staff is ongoing. The proximity of AMISOM headquarters, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and UNSOA in Nairobi, as well as United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, continues to promote collaboration, information sharing and responsiveness among all of the key players in the support effort.

Important progress has also been made with respect to access for missions to Mogadishu. Working closely with the Department of Safety and Security, UNSOA representatives have recently undertaken three visits to AMISOM, and preparations are underway to build up essential security aimed at enabling the establishment of a small rotating permanent presence in the capital. The deployment of international staff is instrumental in enabling the delivery of the required level of support associated with a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Until security conditions permit UNSOA to establish this small footprint in Mogadishu, interim oversight mechanisms will continue using United Nations, AU and contracted personnel in order to achieve our objectives.

When the required capability is fully implemented, UNSOA and the logistics support package for AMISOM will provide one of the key steps for implementing the strategy endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1872 (2009).

In this regard, a fully functioning UNSOA and established supply arrangements will enhance the operating standards of AMISOM troops towards United Nations standards. Although valuable gains are now being made in this effort, it will be some months, probably only in early 2010, before the logistics support package is fully rolled out. However, its effectiveness in supporting AMISOM's implementation of its mandate also depends on increasing the numbers of AMISOM troops on the ground.

Finally, allow me to pay tribute to the Ugandan and Burundian batallions, led by Force Commander Major General Okello, and their efforts on very difficult terrain.

Mr. President: I now give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Duale (Somalia): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council. I very warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish you success. I also wish to express my appreciation to last month's Council President, His Excellency Mr. Baki İlkin of Turkey. Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Ms. Susana Malcorra, who have just briefed us. I very much appreciate their briefings.

I wish to also thank and express our appreciation for the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU), as well as other international regional organizations that are currently supporting Somalia and whose continued support is urgently required.

I would like to begin my presentation with some salient points from the address of His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to the 13th African Union Summit, held from 1 to 3 July 2009 in Sirte, Libya.

His Excellency the President stated that following approximately 20 years when there were no functioning governments, the long-awaited breakthrough in the tragedy experienced by the people

of Somalia came when the National Reconciliation Conference was held in Djibouti under the auspices of the United Nations, the international community and regional and local organizations. It led to a peace agreement between the then interim Somali Government and the opposition at the beginning of this year, and the new joint parliament was formed. His Excellency the President was elected and then a Government of National Unity was appointed and gained the confidence of the parliament and the majority of the Somali people.

Unfortunately, during the long period of chaos in the country, Somalia became a safe haven for militants and terrorists who continue to obstruct peace efforts and pose a threat not only to Somalia but to the region as well. The situation is now very critical, as was mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Now the situation is taking on a new dimension since the emergence of the extremist movements which are linked to Al-Qaida and some State sponsors of terrorism which always maintain agendas that do not promote the interests of peace in Somalia.

The presence of Al-Qaida in Somalia is not merely a claim; it is a reality. On 19 March 2009, Usama bin Laden declared war against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and incited foreign fighters to help overthrow it by mobilizing financial and human resources for that purpose. In the past month, groups of extremists, along with foreign fighters backed by the Eritrean Government, launched attacks on the Government. As a result, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were displaced from Mogadishu.

During this brief period of about five or six months, as mentioned by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, the achievements of the Transitional Federal Government have included the following. Immediately after its formation, the Government, including the Parliament, was moved to Mogadishu, the capital. The Government opened peace and reconciliation negotiations and welcomed all efforts by tribal leaders, businessmen, religious leaders and members of civil society to bring about reconciliation between the Government and the opposition. These efforts resulted in some success, including some of the opposition groups joining the Government. Other achievements include: the preparation and implementation of a temporary budget; the establishment of a central bank and financial institutions and the appointment of an Accountant General; the formation of an anti-corruption commission; the establishment of the Military High Court with the objective of disciplining the Somali forces and preventing human rights violations; the integration of the former transitional Government forces and the forces of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia; and the appointment of a chief of staff, a land force commander, a commander of the navy and coast guard and a commander of the air force.

In order to enable the Transitional Federal Government to take control of the situation in the country and deliver on its mission, His Excellency President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed appealed to heads of State or Government at the just-concluded African Union summit to provide the necessary support to his Government as soon as possible, especially in the following areas: bringing the number of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to 8,000, as promised; broadening the African Union Mission in Somalia and following up on the full participation in the peacekeeping process; and accelerating the strengthening of the Somali national forces by providing training, equipment and funding.

The current situation in Somalia is so serious that it cannot wait for a long period of deliberations, as our President has stated. That is why he has said that we urgently need support as soon as possible. The approval of the implementation of the communiqué of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was also requested, as were contributions for building up the Somali security forces, for providing humanitarian relief for the affected population, which was also mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General Ms. Malcorra, and for building infrastructure and implementing development projects in the country.

In conclusion, let me refer to paragraph 16 of the communiqué of the just-concluded African Union summit in Sirte, which calls on

> "the United Nations Security Council, in line with the AU Peace and Security Council and IGAD communiqué, to take immediate measures, including the imposition of a no-fly zone and blockade of seaports, to prevent the entry of foreign elements into Somalia, as well as flights and shipments carrying weapons and ammunition".

It is these foreign elements which are continuously attacking the Government, AMISOM and the population in general.

The communiqué also requests the imposition of sanctions against all those foreign actors, both within and outside the region, specially Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups engaged in destabilization activities in Somalia, attacks against the Transitional Federal Government, the civilian population and AMISOM, as well as against all the Somali individuals and entities working towards undermining the peace and reconciliation efforts.

In view of the critical situation in Somalia, I have the honour to reiterate the appeal made by His Excellency Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed for urgent action by the Security Council and the international community. I wish also to thank all those who have so far supported the fight against piracy in Somalia, those who are supporting us now and those who will be supporting us in the future.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. Although my President did not mention this, it was requested that I should mention that a United Nations peacekeeping force should also be provided and that AMISOM should become part of that peacekeeping force as soon as possible.

The President: I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): Away from any media cameras, the suffering of the people of Somalia too often fails to get the attention from the international community that it should. At the African Union summit last weekend, African leaders asked the Security Council to take action. So this debate is timely in considering our next steps. My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for organizing it today. I thank Under-Secretaries-General Pascoe and Malcorra for their briefings today. I also thank our colleague the Permanent Representative of Somalia for his contribution.

As the briefings have underlined, progress has been made by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to establish itself in Mogadishu, and the United Nations has moved quickly to deliver the support package for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) that the Council requested and approved. However, fighting in Somalia has increased over recent weeks, and the humanitarian situation has further deteriorated. We have seen a spate of attacks against the Transitional Federal Government and the civilian population by armed groups, apparently set on undermining the Djibouti Agreement, the reconciliation process and Somalia's stability.

There are four main areas where the United Kingdom believes action is needed on Somalia, which should be the focus of the Council's attention over the coming period.

First is to tackle the humanitarian crisis. More than 3 million people are now in need of assistance. That is a staggering figure. I understand that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that over 150,000 people have been displaced from Mogadishu just since 7 May. The international community must continue to support the TFG in delivering basic security, food and health care.

Second is the political track. Ultimately, we need Somali solutions to Somali problems. The Djibouti Agreement provides the basis for that. The international community has to continue to support the TFG and President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, including by living up to the pledges we all made in Brussels in April. The TFG must continue its efforts at reconciliation and in providing security to the population of Somalia.

Thirdly, we need to do all we can to bring to an end the attacks against the TFG, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the civilian population by armed groups, and to provide a secure environment in which the Federal Government can work.

AMISOM has played a critical role in supporting President Sharif's Government and in securing key installations in Mogadishu. The United Kingdom pays tribute to the Governments of Uganda and Burundi for their continuing commitment to that difficult operation. AMISOM needs further strengthening, and further contributions are needed. The United Kingdom has donated £10 million to the United Nations Trust Fund for AMISOM, as well as £5 million directly to the African Union for the Somalia operation. We encourage others to also contribute. As I have said, we welcome the excellent work by the Department of Field Support, as described by Under-Secretary-

General Malcorra, to ensure the rapid delivery of the United Nations logistical support package to AMISOM.

The Council should also seek to halt the illegal flow of weapons and ammunition entering the country and being provided to rebel groups. We should demand that both internal and external actors responsible for carrying out and supporting attacks on TFG and AMISOM forces immediately cease their actions. In line with the request from the African Union, the Security Council should stand ready to take action against any individuals, entities or Governments shown to be arming or supporting those who are carrying out those attacks. The United Kingdom looks forward to receiving shortly the report of the sanctions Monitoring Group and any other evidence submitted to the Somalia sanctions Committee.

The long-term solution to Somalia's security remains the training of the Somali security forces. The United Nations Development Programme has done some good work in training the police, but there is still much to do to strengthen the Joint Security Forces. Several United Nations Member States are providing training, and the United Kingdom welcomes that. We should all consider how we can help.

The fourth issue is piracy. The Security Council needs to continue to work to ensure security on Somalia's seas as well as on land. We must tackle both piracy and its root causes. We welcome the work of the international Contact Group on Piracy. On the operational front, the United Kingdom is providing the command and headquarters of the European Union's naval mission.

The Council should stand behind the call made by African Union leaders last the weekend for an end to the recent fighting in Somalia and for all groups to respect and cooperate with the Transitional Federal Government. Following consultations with other delegations, including Uganda in particular, the United Kingdom yesterday circulated a draft presidential statement backing the African Union's call. The statement also calls for greater international support to AMISOM and makes it clear that the Council will consider the imposition of sanctions on anyone engaged in undermining the stability of Somalia. Reaction to our draft has been very positive. Right now, we are working to iron out some minor changes that colleagues have asked. I hope that we might be in a position to adopt the draft presidential statement at the end of our debate this morning.

After a period of progress earlier this year following the formation of a new Government under a new President, the security and humanitarian situation in Somalia is once again worsening. The Security Council and the international community have to do what they can to provide practical support to both the TFG and AMISOM so we can help to bring about the stability and security that the people of Somalia deserve.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): Let me also thank Under-Secretaries-General Pascoe and Malcorra for their comprehensive briefings today, as well as the Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) and Ambassador Duale, Permanent Representative of Somalia, for being with us today.

The United States remains committed to several goals in Somalia: first, supporting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in its battle against al-Shabaab and other violent extremists; secondly, bolstering the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); thirdly, helping the TFG to establish itself as a legitimate and stable Government that can control its territory and provide basic services to its citizens; fourthly, partnering with the international community to ease the suffering of the Somali people; and fifthly, battling the scourge of piracy off the Somali coast.

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent military offensives designed to topple the TFG that were launched by al-Shabaab, which the United States has designated as a foreign terrorist organization. We are particularly concerned by the recent influx of foreign fighters into Mogadishu's already precarious security environment. Such extremists aim to prolong the cycle of violence and poverty that has ravaged Somalia for almost two decades. The international community must stand united in its support for the TFG.

If the extremists are successful, we could lose yet another generation of Somalis to war, disease and desperate poverty. The people of Somalia have suffered far too much for far too long. The international community must support their efforts to improve security and extend the reach of their Government institutions, as well as provide life-saving humanitarian assistance. Without our support, Somalia risks

becoming a lasting safe haven and training ground for those plotting terrorist attacks around the world.

AMISOM is playing an indispensable role in helping to stabilize the security situation on the ground. In particular, we salute the dedication of the Ugandan and Burundian forces. But their bravery alone is not enough. AMISOM needs the support of the United Nations and its Member States to achieve its objectives. That is why the United States continues to support the provision of a United Nations support package to AMISOM, as approved by the Council in resolution 1872 (2009).

My Government has also provided more than $135 million in training, equipment and logistical support to AMISOM since the Mission's creation. But more still must be done. We call on the States of the African Union to consider sending more peacekeepers to this vital Mission. We also call on United Nations Member States to extend generous support for AMISOM's activities.

We have to do more than support the TFG and AMISOM. We must also bring immense pressure to bear on those working to subvert the TFG and the Djibouti process and to undermine efforts to stabilize Somalia. It is no secret that al-Shabaab has been bolstered by Al-Qaida operatives and by the hundreds of foreign fighters who have been pouring into Somalia. We must all do a better job of stemming the flow of extremists, arms and financial support into Somalia.

The United States is particularly concerned about the financial, military, logistical and political support that the Government of Eritrea is offering to al-Shabaab and other extremists in Somalia. The United States and others have tried repeatedly to engage the Eritrean leadership, including with the aim to convince them to stop, but to date the Eritreans have rebuffed attempts to open a substantive dialogue. But even now it is not too late. The United States calls on the Government of Eritrea to seize this window of opportunity to change course.

The United States is extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Somalia, as described by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe here today. To date, nearly 500,000 Somali refugees have fled the country, and more than 1.5 million people have been internally displaced. In January 2009, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that 3.2 million people needed humanitarian assistance in Somalia, roughly 43 per cent of the population.

To help meet these needs, the United States Government has provided more than $149 million in fiscal year 2009 for humanitarian assistance programmes in Somalia, including more than $9 million to support agriculture and food security, economic and market systems, health and nutrition protection and clean water, sanitation and improved hygiene.

Security in Somalia properly tends to be the international community's main focus — and it should be, as the security situation severely exacerbates the humanitarian crisis. But even so, the international community must redouble its aid efforts to avoid a wider humanitarian catastrophe.

We are also quite concerned about the large influx of refugees into Kenya. Geography will continue to make Kenya, along with Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen, a primary destination for Somalis fleeing their country. But we urgently need to expand refugee camp capacity in Kenya. The three primary camps near the border are terribly overcrowded, with more than 275,000 refugees crammed into a space designed for 90,000 people. The United States and others are supporting the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to acquire more land for new camps and to ease the burden that Kenyan communities bear from hosting so many refugees.

Finally, let me say a few words about piracy. As we all know, piracy off shore is but a symptom of the larger problems facing Somalia on shore. But even as we work to cure the disease we must continue to treat the symptoms. The international response to the piracy problem has been impressive, but we still face significant legal, logistical and political problems over one key component of an effective deterrence strategy. That is the prosecution of suspected pirates. My Government believes that States victimized or affected by piracy bear the primary responsibility for prosecuting pirates. These States must step up and shoulder their share of the burden of the prosecutions, as France, the Netherlands and others have done. In the rare cases in which a State truly cannot prosecute, we applaud the willingness of regional States, such as Kenya, to let themselves be considered as alternative

venues. But in such cases we believe that the affected States should be responsible for helping to defray the trial's costs.

In conclusion, let me say that all of us can see that paying ransom perpetuates acts of piracy. The United States does not offer concessions to hostage-takers, whether they are driven by political or financial motives, and we encourage other States to take a similar position. We would, in particular, be interested in forming a group of so-called non-concession States to work together to help slow the rise of piracy off the Somali coast.

The United States looks forward to continuing to work with the United Nations and all Member States to finally forge a stable, secure and more prosperous Somalia.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to thank Under-Secretaries-General Pascoe and Malcorra for their briefings this morning. My thanks go also to the Permanent Representative of Somalia for his statement.

The Security Council is meeting once again to discuss the situation in Somalia. That situation constitutes a tragedy that has persisted for nearly two decades. During those two decades we have seen fighting among brothers and unjustified bloodshed. They have been two decades of chaos, with ordinary Somali civilians dying either from weapons or from a lack of food and medicine. They have been two decades of continuous displacement and lack of security, two decades of fighting fuelling further fighting and of growing hatred among tribes, with those able to work facing no alternative but to join the ranks of the fighters.

These have been long years marked by human rights violations and by the international community's inability to intervene effectively and firmly. Unfortunately, they have also been marked by interference — whether with good or bad intentions — from international and regional forces, which has served only to intensify the conflict and increase the number of victims.

What is happening in Somalia makes us wonder why the international community has taken no effective action. Where is the responsibility to protect, which was endorsed by the 2005 World Summit? Does the Somali people not deserve protection from its tormentors? Does the legitimate Government resulting from the Djibouti agreement not deserve the support it needs from the international community? Does the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) not deserve financial support and equipment from the United Nations budget? How can the United Nations fail to allocate the funds and equipment necessary to help African States that are willing to contribute troops to bring AMISOM up to its goal of 8,000 troops? Why do some States oppose this, even though they rushed to deploy their warships to the waters off the Somali coast — at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars — when they felt that their own interests were being threatened, while no State has acted to protect Somali fish stocks, which continue to be plundered under the protection of international naval forces for the enjoyment of restaurant-goers in wealthy countries?

What is happening in Somalia cannot be resolved through small measures; these might salvage the Government headquarters or repel an attack by the opposition. No, this requires full and robust United Nations engagement in support of the Government in order to confront those seeking to undermine that Government. That can be achieved only through the Organization's regular budget, because the Government and AMISOM cannot wage this war on the basis of voluntary contributions alone.

The international community had a golden opportunity to resolve the problem of Somalia and restore peace following the election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as President of Somalia and the formation of the Transitional Federal Government. But unfortunately, hesitation in supporting the new Government only encouraged the opposition to work to topple it, and they almost succeeded in doing so.

The time has come for us to learn the lesson and take the opportunity to restore peace to Somalia. To achieve this, the Security Council must take the necessary measures to prevent access by Somali opposition forces to weapons, funds and foreign fighters. Support must also be offered to the Transitional Federal Government in order to establish a national army and capable security forces and to help the Government impose State control throughout the country. We believe that this goal can be achieved only by offering support to AMISOM and transforming it into a United Nations mission as soon as possible. At the same time, we must continue with the political process within the framework of the Djibouti

Agreement and draft a permanent constitution for the country.

As for the issue of piracy, in order to eliminate this phenomenon and enable the Somali people to benefit from their marine wealth, the international forces deployed off the Somali coast must protect Somali marine wealth and combat illegal fishing operations carried out by foreign companies in areas under Somali sovereignty. These forces must help Somali fishermen to carry out their marine activities freely. There is no doubt that this would contribute to resolving the hunger problem in Somalia.

In closing, I commend the great efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, in facilitating the political process within the framework of the Djibouti Agreement. I would also like to commend the role being played by AMISOM and to thank the troop-contributing countries, namely Uganda and Burundi, for their sacrifices and their continued commitment to maintaining the presence of AMISOM in Somalia.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Under-Secretaries-General Lynn Pascoe and Susana Malcorra for their briefings today and Ambassador Elmi Ahmed Duale, the Permanent Representative of Somalia, for his statement. We welcome the presence here among us of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mexico recognizes the important efforts made by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia in its struggle to stabilize the country. We also welcome the work of Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, in the difficult circumstances he is facing. Similarly, we would like to recognize the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to achieve peace and stability in the country and the commitment showed by the Governments of Uganda and Burundi. We hope that the financial situation, the stable situation on the ground and the support pledged by other African countries through the provision of troops will, together, bring about the complete deployment of AMISOM and enable the Mission to fully meet the political, security and humanitarian objectives of its mandate.

Mexico has noted the agreements and statements made by the African Union as a result of the Sirte summit in recent days, as well as the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for regional security.

We believe that it is vital that the Security Council discuss the appeal of the Assembly of the African Union that the Council impose a no-fly zone and a blockade on Somali ports to halt the entry of mercenaries and weapons, as well as issue sanctions against Eritrea for providing support to insurgents. We believe that the Council has a responsibility to take action, given the worsening situation on the ground in all areas and the challenges the country is facing in increasingly critical conditions.

Instability and increased fighting in recent weeks underscore the fragile nature of the situation in the country. The violent deaths of the Minister for National Security and the Chief of Police of Mogadishu are also proof of the disturbing reach that Al-Shabaab and related groups have in terms of the indiscriminate use of violence. Raids by foreign fighters, insurgents' links to Al-Qaida and the radicalization of their forms of combat are also disturbing.

As result of violence and fear, there continues to be a growing number of deaths among civilians, forced displacements of the population, renewed shortages and an increase in illnesses, in particular in camps for internally displaced persons and refugees. It goes without saying that the substantial political and economic costs of this crisis are unsustainable. The United Nations must provide assistance to the Transitional Federal Government in order to promote national reconciliation between the Government itself and opposition groups within the framework of the Djibouti peace process. We call for a rapid implementation of the support shown at the donor conference held in Brussels in April, in accordance with national priorities.

My delegation is convinced that only by reinforcing the capacity of the Government in the security sector and the rule of law and ensuring full compliance with international law will long-term stability in the country and secure living conditions for the Somali population be assured. Mexico believes that the gradual approach that we adopted in resolution 1872 (2009) is the best way to coordinate the work of the Government of Somalia, agencies of this Organization and the support of AMISOM. We need to ensure the successful implementation of that resolution, with the objective of determining, at the

right time, the possible deployment of a peacekeeping operation, in the best possible conditions.

However, given the current difficult conditions and the history of chronic crisis and instability, minimal security conditions on the ground must be urgently established in order to ensure an ongoing climate of stability. We believe we must continue to explore options for finding the most appropriate approach and strengthening the authority of the Transitional Federal Government and promoting its consolidation in terms of its ability to govern and protect the civilian population. The implementation of resolution 1872 (2009) depends on this primary task. It is essential for safeguarding the survival of government functions and the life and dignity of the population by meeting their basic security, health and food needs.

The forced displacement of approximately 200,000 individuals as a result of the most recent wave of violence has worsened the already critical humanitarian situation and affected the survival of some hundreds of thousands of Somali people, some of them for entire generations. My delegation is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation, including the situation of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees, and we regret the deaths, primarily of children, brought about by malnutrition. Another crucial aspect is the situation of insecurity in which humanitarian staff find themselves and which has made it impossible to gain access and entry into some areas. That has led to greater loss of life.

Moreover, we condemn all actions against AMISOM staff and attacks that threaten the safety of civilians and international staff, and the forced recruitment of children. We endorse an appeal for full respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and the rights of refugees by all actors in the conflict. We also call for respect for resolution 1738 (2006) on the protection of the media reporters and associated personnel, and for resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. Similarly, we reaffirm the importance of combating impunity through the most appropriate mechanisms, be they at the national or international level.

We firmly believe that only through a comprehensive approach to the conflict will it be possible to achieve conditions that will allow for peace in Somalia, the end of the generalized violence and the return of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes. On that premise we must conceive any effort to combat the phenomenon of piracy, armed robbery and acts of violence against the safety of navigation in the Gulf of Aden, as well as the need for those responsible for those acts to be tried in accordance with the applicable legal regime.

We support the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, established in accordance with resolution 1851 (2008), and we recognize the importance of multinational operations along the coast to combat piracy. That continues to be an essential element for guaranteeing the entry of humanitarian assistance to the population.

Mexico, as Chair of the sanctions Committee on Somalia, is convinced that the sanctions regime has had a direct impact on security conditions in the country and has strengthened the peace process. We have paid particular attention to the work of the Committee's Monitoring Group with regard to investigations on the illicit flow of arms from Eritrea in support of insurgents. Similarly, in the coming days, within the framework of resolution 1844 (2008), the committee will be in a position to consider a first draft of the list of individuals and entities that are acting against peace and security in the country and that may be subject to sanctions such as travel restrictions and assets freezes.

We urge the countries of the region and the international community as a whole to cooperate with the committee's efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of arms to armed groups in Somalia. Only through a coordinated regional approach will it be possible to establish the minimum conditions required for generating the stability so needed in that country.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): We thank Under-Secretaries-General Malcorra and Pascoe, as well as the Permanent Representative of Somalia, for their presentations.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to convene this important and timely meeting. The Horn of Africa is once again at a critical juncture. The future of Somalia proper and of peace and stability in the region as a whole rests in the balance. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG),

the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and all civilians in Somalia today are together faced with an extremist armed threat that is determined to remove any remnant of stability, normalcy and prosperity and to remodel this already wartorn country in its own narrow mindset.

At this delicate time, it is crucial for the Security Council to keep abreast of developments and apply pressure in order to help ensure that peace and stability in this fragile region are restored. In this context, I would like to underscore that all the elements contained in the Council's presidential statement of 18 May 2009 (S/PRST/2009/15) are equally valid and relevant today and have the full support of Turkey.

While important progress has been made in the implementation of the Djibouti peace process over the past six months, the TFG is still faced with an existential challenge. Moreover, to a large degree the conflict has lost its Somali identity, as outside forces are taking the lead in efforts to destabilize the country. It is clear that the extremist armed groups and foreign elements that are targeting both the TFG and AMISOM are aiming essentially to undermine the reconciliation process and bring about the collapse of the TFG and the Djibouti peace process. This cannot be allowed to happen.

AMISOM has a pivotal role to play in the days and months ahead. Turkey welcomes the ongoing commitment of the African Union (AU) to AMISOM, and we applaud those nations that contribute to AMISOM for their valour. Turkey believes that once it reaches its authorized strength, AMISOM will be able to help turn the tide and assist the TFG in expanding the areas it controls. In this context, it will be important for those nations that have expressed their intention to provide troops to AMISOM to follow through on their promises and for the United Nations to keep providing its support, as outlined in Security Council resolution 1872 (2009).

Turkey attributes great importance to the calls made by the African Union and other regional organizations with regard to Somalia. The statements and decisions issued at the 13th AU Summit in Sirte, Libya, have made the commitment of African leaders to Somalia abundantly clear, and that is crucial. Ultimately, while international support is crucial and must continue unabated, the comprehensive solution to the conflict in Somalia must be an African one, with the AU as its main pillar.

In moving forward, the effective implementation of the arms embargo on Somalia and preventing the entry of foreign elements into Somalia are clearly an urgent priority. If Somalia is to cease being a source of instability for the Horn of Africa, all regional actors need to become a part of the solution and not the problem.

On the other hand, while evaluating possible options on how to develop a pragmatic and concrete framework for further helping Somalia, Turkey believes that a results-oriented approach that takes into consideration past experiences with regard to this country and the region will be the most effective one.

The Transitional Federal Government has and will continue to enjoy the full support of Turkey as the only legitimate authority in Somalia. We recently contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for Somalia and stand ready to train AMISOM troops in Turkey. We are also in the process of evaluating how we can help train Somali national forces.

On the other hand, the scourge of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia continues to be a serious threat to international maritime safety, in particular to seafarers and international trade, as well as to the security and prosperity of the countries in the region. Suffering from this scourge, Turkey deplores and condemns these illegal acts and continues to contribute to counter-piracy efforts at sea with two frigates deployed in the region through Combined Task Force 151 and Standing NATO Maritime Group 2.

Turkey also fully supports the work of the Contact Group on Somali Piracy, which was established pursuant to resolution 1851 (2008). Yet, we fully recognize that a lasting solution to the problem can be found only if anti-piracy efforts are supported and complemented by concrete policies and measures that will contribute to the establishment of law and order in Somalia, as well as to sustained economic development in the region.

Needless to say, as in the past, our significant commitment to Somalia will continue.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Under-Secretary-General Malcorra for their briefings on the situation in Somalia.

That situation continues to be unstable. The recent increase in bloodshed in Mogadishu and the continued attacks by radical Islamists against the Somali army and police forces and the peacekeepers of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) constitute yet another alarming wake-up call regarding the situation not only in Somalia, but throughout the region.

Russia resolutely advocates achieving sustained peace and national reconciliation in Somalia on the basis of the Djibouti Agreement and in the interest of strengthening regional stability. We support the efforts of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and of the Transitional Federal Government. Clearly, it is only joint efforts on the part of all constructive political forces in Somalia that will consolidate society and restore State authority and lasting peace.

Intensifying international efforts and working to achieve a Somali settlement, together with humanitarian assistance, are crucial at this stage. In that regard, we note the practical steps undertaken by the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union to build the capacities of the Somali Government both in the area of security and in terms of strengthening federal authority.

AMISOM is playing an important role in stabilizing the situation in the country, strengthening the national security sector and advancing the political process. The logistical support package and other assistance to AMISOM from the United Nations, in accordance with resolution 1872 (2009), continue to be important. We commend the contribution made to a Somali settlement by Uganda and Burundi, which are troop contributors to AMISOM. We call upon all States, in particular the States of the region, to pursue sound policies aimed at assisting the peace process in Somalia.

We believe it is essential that States comply fully with the established arms embargo. We advocate the prompt launching of the sanctions regime against individuals and entities, in accordance with resolution 1844 (2008).

Piracy off the coast of Somalia remains a serious destabilizing factor in the subregion. There is also a growing risk that it will spread to other vulnerable areas off the African coast. We believe that we need to continue to provide the Somali authorities with comprehensive assistance to counter that scourge. The key to overcoming the dangerous trends in the area is to remedy the situation in Somalia itself. Of equal importance are efforts to provide naval escorts for vessels and to destroy the piracy infrastructure, particularly its financial component. Russia is taking an active part in that collective effort.

Military measures to prevent the piracy attacks will not alone produce the desired results. There is also a need for preventive efforts to bring perpetrators to justice, and the Russian Federation sees this as key in the anti-piracy strategy. Here, both short- and long-term measures are required. We believe that, in addition to building the criminal justice capacities of the State and the subregion, we need to consider the establishment of international mechanisms for prosecuting persons involved in piracy and armed robbery at sea.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public debate on the situation in Somalia. We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe and Under-Secretary-General Susana Malcorra for their briefings on the most recent developments in that country and for their related work in the Secretariat. We welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Somalia and the Permanent Observer of the African Union and thank them for participating in today's meeting.

China is following very closely the serious situation in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa. The protracted problems in Somalia have caused serious difficulties for the country's people, pose a serious threat to the situation in the Horn of Africa region and have now become a serious challenge for the international community. Stabilizing the situation in Somalia as soon as possible and achieving peace and stability in the country would not only meet the expectations of the people of Somalia but also serve the common interests of the Horn of Africa region and of the international community at large.

In addressing the situation in Somalia, the top priority is to stabilize the security situation in the country. We condemn the recent armed attacks against the Transitional Federation Government and against Somali civilians. We urge all parties in Somalia to observe a ceasefire throughout the national territory as soon as possible and to seek a political settlement to

their disputes. We support the early establishment of robust security forces in Somalia and call upon the international community to provide support in that regard.

We commend the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for its important contribution to stabilizing the situation under very precarious circumstances. We call on the United Nations to intensify its efforts to implement the support package for AMISOM.

The key to achieving peace in Somalia is for all political parties in the country to forge a consensus for peace. Only when a genuine political foundation for peace is laid in Somalia will the international community's external assistance truly be able to play an effective role. At this time, it must be pointed out in particular that all parties in Somalia must reach a consensus regarding the urgency of resolving the Somali issue.

The countries in the Horn of Africa must be fully aware that they are all in the same boat regarding the question of Somalia, that a win-win situation can be achieved only through peace and that fighting can only be disastrous for all. We sincerely hope that all countries in the Horn of Africa can make full use of their influence and do their utmost to promote negotiations to move the peace process forward in Somalia in order to make swift and substantive progress.

China has always maintained that the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, should play a more active role on the question of Somalia. We call on the Organization to intensify its efforts to fulfil its commitment to providing assistance to Somalia, the Somali Government and AMISOM. The Chinese Government has already provided AMISOM's two major troop-contributing countries, Uganda and Burundi, with 5 million renminbi each in logistical assistance. In addition, it will soon provide the African Union with another $400,000 in cash for assistance to support AMISOM.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Under-Secretaries-General Lynn Pascoe and Susana Malcorra for their presentations, as well as our colleague the Permanent Representative of Somalia.

Two months ago almost to the day, the insurgents of Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam rejected the path of dialogue and launched a major offensive. This was and is aimed against the Transitional Federal Government, which has the support of the international community, and also against the positive political process that President Sherif is leading by calling upon all parties to join in the Djibouti process.

The fighting goes on, as recalled by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe, with its violence and suffering. The cost of the attacks is high, and the victims always the same: women, children and other vulnerable people. Two hundred thousand more people have had to leave Mogadishu — and some families had just recently returned. These latest victims are added to the 2 million people who are surviving in makeshift shelters and the more than 3 million who already rely on international assistance.

The conditions in which the humanitarian workers are operating have worsened even further. It must be recalled that last year more than 30 of them were killed. The same is true for journalists, who often give their lives to carry out their profession. The number of refugees in neighbouring countries is growing, in particular in Kenya, where the sites hosting them are overwhelmed. France joins the international community in firmly condemning the attacks and the violence.

We note with the greatest concern reports indicating that the insurgents are benefiting from reinforcements of extremist foreign fighters and the support of foreign Governments, specifically Eritrea, in the form of weapons, which is in violation of the arms embargo imposed by the Council.

France carefully noted the decisions taken at the African Union summit in Sirte and is prepared to continue to follow the path of sanctions against all those who jeopardize the Djibouti Agreements. In that respect, we look forward to the report the Security Council has requested from the Monitoring Group. As I cited the Djibouti Agreement, let me also underscore the very positive role played by Djibouti in dealing with crisis in Somalia, despite the challenges that country has faced since the June 2008 military attack against it by Eritrea.

The Transitional Federal Government is under attack, but it is resisting those continued attacks. The international community must continue to provide full

political support and strengthen its technical and material assistance. The training of Somali security forces is key to building the country's military capacity. For that reason France, as it pledged at the Brussels conference, will begin to train 500 Somalis this month in Djibouti.

European Union ministers meeting in Brussels have begun to consider how the Union could combine our initiative with a possible training mission under the European Security and Defence Policy.

Here, we wish to highlight the courage of AMISOM's troops, in particular those from Uganda and Burundi, who are resolutely providing support to the Transitional Federal Government. We pay tribute to them at a time when they are regularly targeted by the insurgents.

The international community must provide firm support for the African force. In Sirte, the African Union decided to strengthen the number of troops deployed on the ground in order to reach the mandated goal of 8,000 troops requested by the Somali Government. We are pleased by and welcome that commitment. France has contributed to the training of four contingents for AMISOM. The European Union, which is the leading contributor to the United Nations budget and the leading financial partner of the African Union, including through the Peace Facility for Africa, provides resolute support to AMISOM. Here, I would endorse the statement that the Permanent Representative of Sweden will make shortly on behalf of the European Union.

The United Nations too has an important role to play to facilitate strengthening AMISOM. I thank Ms. Malcorra for her information on the United Nations logistical support package. More than ever before, we need to respond rapidly and in concrete ways to the most urgent operational needs of the African forces.

All of this makes action to fight piracy off the Somali coast even more necessary. Since the initial operations to protect World Food Programme (WFP) vessels launched by France in November 2007, the fight against piracy has grown in scope. The European Union, in launching Operation Atalanta, is playing a very active role in fighting piracy, protecting vulnerable shipping and providing security for the increasingly significant international aid shipments on which millions of Somalis depend. The money spent to keep the European Union naval forces afloat permits the transport of that aid. Those efforts are far from useless; here I would point out that WFP food shipments have quadrupled from 2007 to 2008. Those efforts must continue.

Just yesterday a Turkish ship was attacked by pirates off the Somali coast. It must be remembered that in the past two years French forces have arrested more than 200 pirates in the course of more than 80 maritime operations. For that reason, the European Union has extended the mandate of Operation Atalanta for one more year and is considering a full range of measures that will make it possible to take better account of the various dimensions of counter-piracy operations on the sea and on land. Here I stress the particular importance of capacity-building for States of the region so that they can try and imprison pirates who have been arrested. United Nations support will be crucial.

Because of the gravity of the situation, it is reasonable to give priority in this debate to short-term measures, while bearing in mind more long-term measures such as the fight against impunity, because the culture of impunity that prevails today in Somalia is a major hurdle to peace. There is also a need, once the situation allows, to resume political dialogue, without which there will be no lasting peace in Somalia. In that regard, let me commend the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, and assure him of France's full support.

In conclusion, I would like to state my delegation's support for the draft presidential statement prepared by the United Kingdom, for which I express my thanks.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Under-Secretary-General Malcorra for their briefings. I would also like to thank Ambassador Duale for his statement and to recognize the presence among us of the Permanent Observer of the African Union.

Once again the Council is meeting to review the situation in Somalia. The present situation calls for action by the international community to back up decisions already taken to support a Government that is arduously working to build a viable State in Somalia. The cost of inaction would be anarchy imposed by those who lack any defined political agenda and who

are prepared to attack regional stability and jeopardize international peace and security.

The Government of Somalia requires cooperation from all parties of Somali society who are committed to national reconciliation, along with the support of the international community, so that it can be the natural partner in inclusive negotiations within the Djibouti peace process. In particular, we recognize the decisive work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, who is committed to making progress in this political process.

The strategy to overcome the crisis in Somalia must be led by the Somalis themselves. National ownership of the process is in this case an absolute imperative. The role of the international community is to support and strengthen the capacity of the Government to demonstrate the advantages of peace and to take advantage of secure spaces in order to lay the foundation for sustainable reconstruction and development.

Costa Rica reaffirms its support for the Secretary-General's political strategy for Somalia, as well as his three-phase approach to meet the security challenges of the country. We are pleased to note the decision to make move forward in this area, in particular the announcement that, in the very near future, we may see an initial United Nations presence in Mogadishu. It is now a question of strengthening the Somali security institutions as well as AMISOM. These are critical elements for the achievement of stability in Somalia.

In this regard, we call for prompt fulfilment of the commitments made at the Brussels donors conference and of other pledges to the United Nations trust fund. With regard to transparency and the achievement of objectives, we welcome the progress reported on the memorandum of understanding requested in resolution 1863 (2009).

Costa Rica also recognizes the contributions to AMISOM made by the Governments of Burundi and Uganda and welcomes the recent decision of the African Union to raise the military and police components of the Mission to the troop levels provided for in its mandate.

The worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia is a matter of concern to Costa Rica. We condemn the attacks against the civilian population and obstacles to free access for humanitarian assistance. In this regard, the fight against piracy has yielded praiseworthy benefits in terms of access for such humanitarian assistance.

I would conclude by reminding all parties of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law and by stressing that combating impunity is a priority for peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me first thank Under-Secretaries-General Pascoe and Malcorra for their briefings today. Let me also add that we highly welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Somalia and the Permanent Observer of the African Union.

Austria aligns itself with the statement that the representative of Sweden will deliver in the course of this debate on behalf of the presidency of the European Union.

Austria fully supports the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In the first half of this year, important progress in the Djibouti peace process has been achieved. However, the security situation has deteriorated considerably since then. While the focus of our efforts needs to be on stabilizing the situation, it is also important that efforts continue at reaching out to opposition groups which are not part of the Djibouti process.

The Djibouti Agreement constitutes the only viable and legitimate framework for achieving lasting peace in Somalia. We therefore urge all parties in Somalia to join this process and its structures and, by doing so, to contribute to the stabilization and development of the country. A renegotiation of the Djibouti Agreement cannot be an option.

Austria condemns the attempts of extremists to overthrow the TFG. We are deeply worried by reports about foreign support to the insurgency. We also note the deep concern expressed by the heads of State or Government of the African Union during their recent summit in Sirte concerning arms supplies to insurgent groups in Somalia.

As others have already said, we will have more information on this issue when the Monitoring Group of the Somali sanctions Committee reports to the Security Council at the end of this month. That report will give us a very important opportunity to further discuss this issue as well as to discuss possible action by the Council.

With reference to the comments made by the Permanent Representative of Somalia about the presence of foreign fighters in his country, let me add that substantiated information on this issue may also be of interest to the Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999).

Those who suffer most in the situation are civilians, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially women and children, who are the most vulnerable. We have seen a surge in the number of IDPs in the past two months. More than 200,000 people have fled Mogadishu alone, increasing the number of IDPs in the country, as others have already noted, to over 1.2 million. We are deeply concerned by their catastrophic humanitarian and human rights situation. Extrajudicial and arbitrary executions, arrests and torture, as practiced by Al-Shabaab, must stop immediately.

We also call on all parties to allow unhindered access to humanitarian aid for those in need and to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel in Somalia. We condemn recent attacks on aid organizations. We pay tribute to humanitarian workers, who continue to deliver much-needed humanitarian aid in this very difficult environment.

We applaud the establishment of the Justice and Reconciliation Working Group as a vehicle to addressing impunity for human rights violations in Somalia. We encourage the parties represented in the Working Group to work closely together to address this problem vigorously.

We express our deep appreciation to the African Union, and to Uganda and Burundi as AMISOM troop-contributors, for the efforts and risks they are taking to improve the situation in and around Mogadishu. Austria also strongly supports the United Nations logistics support package for AMISOM. Moreover, Austria stressed the need for close cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and donors, such as the European Union, in addressing the most pressing needs of Somalia and the wider region of the Horn of Africa.

Concerning the scourge of piracy, we attach high importance to addressing its root causes and ensuring accountability. Operation Atalanta, the European Union mission to fight piracy, is undoubtedly the most visible and most recent contribution of the European Union in Somalia. Of course, it is not the only one.

The European Union's contribution in the form of humanitarian aid and development programmes is also considerable. Like all other members of the European Union, Austria attaches high importance to support for the Somali security sector and AMISOM, thus contributing to a climate conducive to achieving peace and development.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to begin by expressing appreciation to Mr. Pascoe and Ms. Malcorra for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the presentation made by Ambassador Duale this morning. The situation in Somalia calls for an urgent response by the Security Council, so Japan commends you, Mr. President, for holding this timely debate.

Japan shares the serious concern over the worsening security situation in Somalia. We condemn the attacks by rebel groups against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which have been intensifying since early May. As the security situation deteriorates, the humanitarian situation also worsens, with growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, as Mr. Pascoe reported.

In order to respond effectively to the security situation, we should make an urgent effort to strengthen, first of all, the Somali security institutions and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The pledges made at the donors conference in Brussels need to be disbursed in an expeditious manner. As a part of its pledges, Japan will soon disburse $9 million to the trust fund in support of AMISOM.

AMISOM plays an indispensable role in support of the TFG. We sincerely appreciate the troop contributions made to date by Burundi and Uganda, and we thank other countries that are actively considering providing troops. We commend the African Union for its decision to extend the mandate of AMISOM until 31 January 2010.

Japan believes it is essential to make the utmost effort to increase AMISOM troop levels to the full strength of 8,000, as requested by the Secretary-General. To realize this target, speedy implementation of the United Nations logistics support package is vitally important. We commend the work done by the Department of Field Support. We fully support those efforts.

The instability in Somalia is caused by internal as well as external factors and affects stability in the region as a whole. It is essential and urgent to cut off external military and economic assistance to the rebel groups. The countries in the region need to come together to assist the TFG.

Japan is closely following the ongoing discussion among the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union member States, including at the recent summit in Sirte, on strengthened measures to support Somalia. The international community must enhance its support to the TFG, including through diplomatic efforts. It is our belief that, before any action is taken, the full implications and effectiveness thereof must be carefully considered. Japan is ready to take active part in the discussion in the Council on the way forward.

The top priority is to address and improve the worsening security situation in central and southern Somalia. Humanitarian and reconstruction needs must be met in parallel. The importance of speedy disbursement of earlier pledges cannot be overemphasized in this context.

Anti-piracy measures are another high priority, which are closely related to the security situation on land. Longer-term solutions will require restoring stability and governance inside Somalia. Meanwhile, international cooperation is essential to protect one of the most important transport routes. Japan, for its part, has sent two destroyers and two P-3C maritime patrol aircraft to the Gulf of Aden as part of the anti-piracy measures. We also enacted a new Law on the Penalization of Acts of Piracy and Measures against Acts of Piracy. We extend support to the piracy-related centres in the region and for a training and job creation programme for young people, who may be potential candidates for future pirates.

Japan will chair the next plenary meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia in September at Headquarters in New York. We hope that the coordinated efforts of the international community will have a positive influence on the security situation on land. It is important to provide the Somali people with the tangible benefits of the assistance of the international community and to create the necessary conditions for them to achieve stability in the country.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): Let me begin by joining others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Pascoe, and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Ms. Malcorra, for providing us with an update on the political and security situation in Somalia as well as on the steps taken to strengthen its security institutions and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We are also thankful for the remarks of the Permanent Representative of Somalia, and we welcome the Permanent Observer of the African Union, whose statement we are looking forward to hearing.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Allow me now to make some short remarks in my national capacity.

Croatia is encouraged by the progress that has been made on the political track, particularly the actions of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), towards a more inclusive political process and genuine national reconciliation. We commend such determination and firmly believe it warrants the unrelenting and concrete support of the international community. We reiterate our full support for the Transitional Federal Government and President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Their hard-won political gains must be preserved and further built upon. That being said, we add our voice to the calls for all Somali stakeholders to opt for dialogue and join the Djibouti peace process, which continues to be the best option for lasting peace in Somalia.

We strongly condemn all attempts to halt the current political momentum, destabilize the transitional federal institutions and undermine the Djibouti peace process. The armed insurgency by hardliners thus continues to be of utmost concern. We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and deplore the toll that the insurgent attacks have had on both the civilian population and the already dire humanitarian situation in the country. In the light of that, we urge all parties involved in the conflict to adhere to international humanitarian law and to respect human rights.

Croatia is also alarmed and extremely concerned about reports of foreign or outside interference with regard to insurgent attacks and other violence taking place in Somalia, in particular reports concerning support to insurgents being provided by neighbouring countries, namely Eritrea, and the destabilizing potential of such actions in the whole region.

We would like to recall the obligations that all States Members of the United Nations have with regard to respecting the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Security Council and also to reiterate that the Council already has at its disposal tools for dealing with all inside and outside spoilers of the peace process. In that light, we particularly look forward to the forthcoming report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia.

Croatia greatly appreciates the unerring efforts of AMISOM, whose troops are operating in an extremely difficult environment. While echoing the calls to strengthen its capacities, we commend the troop-contributing countries, in particular Uganda and Burundi, and we hope that others will follow suit in fulfilling their pledges.

We welcome the pledges made at the international conference in support of Somalia's security institutions and AMISOM held in Brussels on 23 April. We hope today that the materialization has already begun and that it will continue at a fast pace. We also appreciate all other efforts and initiatives aimed at improving the capacity of Somalia's security sector, especially as an accountable and capable security and police force represents the backbone of efforts to achieve stability in the country. It also enables the United Nations to further its involvement and assist Somalia to the best of its abilities.

That being said, we are pleased to hear about the possibility of establishing a light United Nations presence in Mogadishu in the near future, as stated by Under-Secretary-General Malcorra during her briefing. We are also pleased to hear about the implementation of the support package by the United Nations.

Concerning piracy, we support the work that has thus far been done to tackle the issue of piracy off the coast of Somalia, including, in particular but not exclusively, Operation Atalanta. We are aware of the need for the continuation of the efforts to ensure the safety of maritime routes.

My delegation would especially like to express its full appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Ould Abdallah, for his relentless efforts and valuable contribution in promoting dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia.

Finally, I would also like to express our support for the draft presidential statement that we are about to adopt.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Let me thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe and Ms. Susana Malcorra for the briefings they just gave us. I would also commend the participation in this debate of our colleague from Somalia.

Burkina Faso is very concerned over the current situation in Somalia, which is marked by a very serious deterioration in terms of security, particularly in Mogadishu, as a result of the clashes between illegal armed groups and Government troops, and this despite for the calls for calm and restraint issued by the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

Attributed to the militia of the Al-Shabaab movement, assisted by foreign fighters, these attacks have caused many victims, particularly among the civilian population. Political officials, including the Minister of the Interior, have been assassinated. The magnitude of the attacks and the intensity of the fighting corroborate the thesis of the involvement of the foreign forces that support the insurgents in terms of weapons, fighters and logistics. All of that once again confirms the fact that the settlement of the Somali crisis will depend to a great extent on the position of its neighbours. That is why it is absolutely indispensable that all States of the region, without exception, fully comply with the arms embargo and refrain from provided military, logistical or any other kind of support to the illegal militias active in Somalia.

Given the seriousness of these events, the African Union Peace and Security Council, in its communiqué of 15 June 2009, reiterated its deep concern over the growing presence of foreign elements in Mogadishu and in other parts of Somalia and therefore urged the Security Council to impose sanctions against those individuals or States who oppose the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia.

That recommendation was ratified in a decision adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held from 1 to 3 July 2009, which called on the Security Council

> "in accordance with the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to take the necessary

immediate steps ... to prevent the entry of foreign combatants into Somalia, as well as to impose sanctions against any foreign actor, whether in the region or outside it, in particular Eritrea, which is providing support for armed groups involved in destabilizing activities in Somalia".

My country, which recognizes as legitimate only the Transitional Federal Government, certainly supports that decision. We therefore call on the Security Council to take full note of it. I would also like to call on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) to speed up its work, in cooperation with the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to establish a list of individuals opposed to the peace process in Somalia.

We must also note that peace is receding daily in Somalia. The responses to date appear to have served merely as stop-gap measures. Without minimizing the difficulties such an endeavour would entail, it seems that deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation to join AMISOM would be the last recourse. In the meanwhile, it seems to us that the current situation calls for two different steps, namely, the provision of direct emergency assistance to Somalia to help it to re-establish security in Mogadishu and throughout the rest of the country, and the speeding of the deployment of the United Nations support package for AMISOM.

We would like to thank Uganda and Burundi for the commendable efforts they continue to make. Given the seriousness of the situation, we call on African countries that have already promised troops for AMISOM to honour their commitments as soon as possible in order to be able to strengthen the Mission.

With regard to the political situation, we reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement, which we believe to be the sole framework for a resolution to the Somali crisis. The efforts already made as part of that framework are encouraging and merit ongoing support, in particular in order to bring all political factions into the political process. Burkina Faso also encourages the new Somali leaders to continue their policy of openness in order to strengthen the trust of partners.

With regard to the human rights situation, it undoubtedly continues to be a source of concern, given the ongoing occurrence of assassination attempts and attacks against Somali leaders and civilians alike. AMISOM troops and humanitarian personnel are not immune from threats and attacks, either. We condemn all violence against them and call on the Security Council to take the necessary steps to ensure their protection.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Secretariat to help Somalia. In particular, we commend the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, who despite the huge difficulties continues to display unrelenting determination and commitment to peace in Somalia.

We have no doubt that a stable and prosperous Somalia will one day emerge, so long as there is ongoing support from the international community, continued commitment on the part of all Somali stakeholders and the support of the States of the region.

Lastly, we support the draft presidential statement that has been submitted by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, for their insightful briefings. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Somalia for his statement. My delegation also welcomes the participation of the Permanent Observer of the African Union at this meeting.

Taking stock of the gravity and complexity of the current situation in Somalia, my delegation remains deeply concerned about the ongoing violence in and around Mogadishu, as reflected by intensified attacks by insurgent groups, most notably Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Aslam, against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Those armed attacks have led to the deaths and injuries of many peacekeepers and civilians. We are also gravely concerned about the extremely alarming humanitarian situation, with over 1 million people internally displaced and more than 3 million on the verge of starvation.

Given the suffering that is being visited upon the civilian population and the continuing deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the country, there is obviously an urgent need for immediate and vigorous international support for the TFG's

endeavours to repel the onslaught of extremist forces, which are intent on destroying the Djibouti peace process and spoiling the efforts to bring peace and stability to Somalia through political reconciliation. Member States of the United Nations are urged to fulfil the pledges they made in Brussels last April to provide the TFG with adequate assistance, in particular much-needed funds and assistance to rebuild Somalia's security institutions and to train its security forces.

Viet Nam supports the TFG's call for the mobilization of additional troops for AMISOM in order to enable it to withstand insurgent attacks. We highly appreciate the efforts made by the Governments of Uganda and Burundi in contributing to the maintenance of the security in Mogadishu. In that connection, we welcome the pledges made by the Governments of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana and other African Union countries to contribute troops to AMISOM. We hope that those precious commitments will be realized in a timely and fruitful way.

For its part, the Security Council has decided to provide logistical support to AMISOM. We are encouraged that, on 25 June, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly approved that decision in the amount of over $138 million. We see reasons for hope coming from the common interest and concerted efforts of the Security Council in the current situation in Somalia.

Further deterioration in Somalia, with Al-Shabaab fighters and fighters linked to Al-Qaida controlling much of the southern and central parts of the country, would have regional implications and could escalate the conflict. More dangerously, it could run the risk of turning the region into a safe haven for international terrorists. We must work together to prevent the spread of that danger, end the scourge of violence and advance the cause of peace and stability.

For that effort to succeed, it is necessary to work for closer cooperation and a more effective partnership among the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the League of Arab States to address the challenges that confront Somalia and to bring about lasting peace and security in the region. The United Nations should continue to be a strong partner in that endeavour.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Uganda.

I wish to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, for their briefings this morning. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Somalia, Mr. Elmi Ahmed Duale, for his statement. I welcome the participation in this debate of the Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) and of the Permanent Representative of Sweden, representing the presidency of the European Union.

The Security Council has spent a great deal of time discussing the situation in Somalia. In the past six months alone, the Council has adopted two resolutions — resolutions 1863 (2009) and 1872 (2009) — and has issued one presidential statement — S/PRST/2009/15 — and four statements to the press. In spite of the attention paid to the situation in Somalia, the conflict in the country continues to destroy lives and to have a negative impact on the whole region. The situation also continues to disrupt international trade, through piracy, and poses a threat to international peace and security.

The Djibouti peace process represents the best opportunity to achieve lasting peace in Somalia. We commend the efforts made by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to advance the political process in the country. At the same time, we are concerned about the fact that, despite the efforts at reconciliation made by President Ahmed's Government, there are still some elements within and outside Somalia that are bent on taking the path of violence. Uganda condemns the attacks on the TFG, the civilian population and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by violent opposition groups and foreign elements, in an attempt to undermine the political process and reconciliation efforts.

Uganda welcomes the support given to ease the humanitarian situation in the country and the support extended to the TFG and to AMISOM. We call upon the United Nations and other partners to expedite the support necessary to enable AMISOM effectively to implement its mandate. We also call upon AU member States to provide the personnel required to enable AMISOM to reach its authorized capacity of 8,000 troops. As provided for in Security Council resolution 1863 (2009), the presence of AMISOM in Somalia is a transitional step towards the envisaged United Nations peacekeeping operation. Therefore, the Security

Council should continue to make the necessary preparations for the eventual rehatting of AMISOM.

The African Union Assembly, meeting in Sirte, Libya, a few days ago, called upon the Security Council to take urgent measures to address the grave situation in Somalia. Uganda calls upon the Security Council to respond accordingly.

Finally, we thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for the draft presidential statement, which Uganda supports.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Lila Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mrs. Ratsifandrihamanana (*spoke in French*): I am pleased, Sir, to see you presiding over the Security Council. We are sincerely grateful to you for initiative in convening this debate on the situation in Somalia. I also thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe and Ms. Susana Malcorra for their very thorough and authoritative briefings. I pay tribute to their respective departments for their activities and for their efforts with respect to Somalia.

Having just returned from African Union summit, which on 3 July completed its work in Sirte, Libya, I am duty-bound to describe some of the African Union's recent action on Somalia as well as the related decision adopted by African heads of State or Government.

Our thanks go to the Permanent Representative of Somalia for his statement; through him, we express our appreciation for the significant progress achieved by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and his Government. In that regard, I would mention the rebuilding of State institutions, the restoration of revenue collection mechanisms, the reorganization of the security forces, capacity-building and efforts aimed at bringing clan and religious leaders into the peace process.

But, as we know, intensified attacks by insurgents since the beginning of May have unfortunately hampered and jeopardized those considerable achievements. Clashes have led to heavy loss of civilian lives and have resulted in an estimated 200,000 or more displacements, as Under-Secretary-General Pascoe stated this morning. As all Council members have noted, the situation remains extremely fragile.

However, thanks to the continued support of the international community for the Government and the people of Somalia, the Djibouti peace process has held. Members will recall that, on 22 May 2009, in support of the recommendations of the Council of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union requested that the United Nations Security Council impose sanctions against all foreign elements providing support for armed groups responsible for destabilization in Somalia. That request has the support of the International Contact Group on Somalia and was reiterated at the Sirte summit.

As noted by Under-Secretary-General Malcorra, the present military force of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Mogadishu stands at 4,274 troops, comprising three battalions from Uganda and two from Burundi. But AMISOM still lacks four of the nine battalions it needs, along with maritime and air components. The present AMISOM police force consists of a team of six police officers and 89 trainers, advisers and mentors for deployment to Mogadishu in the coming weeks to begin the crucial task of training 10,000 members of all Somali police forces, in accordance with the Djibouti Agreement.

As part of the troop-generation effort, the African Union Commission has called upon Member States and other partners to bring about the rapid deployment of a battalion from Sierra Leone and one from Malawi. Work is also under way to make it possible to deploy a third battalion from Burundi and to begin the relocation of AMISOM's civilian headquarters from Nairobi to Mogadishu.

We are particularly grateful to the United Nations for establishing a special trust fund; the first phase has been approved by the General Assembly, amounting to $71.6 million. A memorandum of understanding defining the modalities for implementing the support package is being finalized by the Secretariat and the African Union Commission. However, in addition to the special trust fund and the support to the peace process provided by the European Union and made available to the African Union, in addition to all of these considerable efforts, we believe that AMISOM, which was duly authorized by the Security Council, deserves continuous financing through regular contributions from United Nations Member States.

(*spoke in English*)

In its decision adopted during its just-completed 13th session, the Assembly of the African Union welcomed the significant progress made in the political process in Somalia and urged all Somali stakeholders yet to commit to the dialogue to do so and join the peace process. The Assembly strongly condemned the recent attacks on the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and the civilian population by armed groups and foreign elements bent on undermining the reconciliation process and regional stability, and demanded that they put an end to such attacks, which are tantamount to attempts at an unconstitutional change of government.

The African Union (AU) Assembly further expressed its full support for the TFG as the legitimate authority in Somalia and urged the countries of the region, other AU member States and the international community as a whole to provide all the necessary support to the TFG to enable it to face up to the situation.

The AU Assembly appealed to AU member States to provide the necessary military and police personnel to enable AMISOM to reach its authorized strength. It paid tribute to the troop-contributing countries, namely Burundi and Uganda, and further expressed gratitude to all the member States and partners providing support to AMISOM.

The Assembly called on the United Nations Security Council to take immediate measures, including the imposition of a no-fly zone — as already pointed out by a number of members of the Council — and a blockade of seaports to prevent the entry into Somalia of foreign elements and of flights and shipments carrying weapons and ammunition to armed groups inside Somalia. It also called on the Council to impose sanctions against all those foreign actors, especially Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups engaged in destabilization activities in Somalia and in attacks against the TFG, the civilian population and AMISOM. I would also like to stress the need for the Security Council to take rapid action accordingly.

Also, since the question of ransom to terrorists was raised here by the Permanent Representative of the United States, I am pleased to share with this Council that the Assembly of the African Union took the important decision to combat the payment of ransom to terrorist groups. By this decision, the AU Assembly requested the Council to adopt a restrictive resolution against the payment of ransom in order to consolidate the provisions put in place by resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1267 (1999).

Because AMISOM can only do so much, I should like at this juncture to renew the call for its takeover by the United Nations, in accordance with the express wish of the Somalis, as contained in the Djibouti Agreement, in order to achieve an accelerated end to the ongoing hostilities. We all have a duty to bring an end to this tragedy in Somalia.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The main challenge facing the Somali Government and the international community is to maintain the political momentum that started a few months ago. That momentum is now being sabotaged by hard-line insurgents, who deliberately seek to undermine a political solution by targeting the Transitional Federal Institutions and the Djibouti peace process. The European Union strongly condemns the recent killings of the Minister of Security, the police chief in Mogadishu, a member of the parliament and the attacks against civilians in south and central Somalia.

The European Union calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities to avoid further civilian casualties and deplores the humanitarian consequences of recent attacks. Some 200,000 people have been forced to leave Mogadishu in recent weeks, adding to the 1 million previously displaced. We urge all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, respect human rights and protect the civilian population.

The European Union welcomes the efforts of the African Union to bring urgent attention to the situation in Somalia and to consider options for reversing the trends of recent months. We take due note of the message of the African Union in Sirte in this regard.

The European Union strongly calls on all States to respect the United Nations arms embargo.

Stabilization of the security environment is vital for building State institutions, for providing necessary humanitarian assistance and for resuming a path to development and political reconciliation. Once the security situation improves in Mogadishu and beyond, the Transitional Federal Government must resume its efforts to complete the Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic. We stress our support for the Transitional Federal Government under the leadership of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and welcome his efforts to consolidate the political process through a broad and inclusive dialogue.

The European Union expresses its appreciation to the African Union and to the countries contributing troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for their efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation in Mogadishu. The capabilities of AMISOM need further strengthening. Thus far, the European Union has committed a total of €40 million, in addition to bilateral contributions from its member States. Additional support is under consideration.

The international conference on security in Somalia, held in Brussels on 22 and 23 April, expressed unanimous support for AMISOM and the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government to build inclusive and accountable national capacity in the security sector. The considerable pledges made by the European Union at the Brussels conference underline the importance we attach to this endeavour.

There is now an urgent need to follow up. The pledges made by the international community must be implemented swiftly. The security sector should be committed to the rule of law, respect for human rights and the principle of good governance.

Enhancing the capacity of the Somali security and police forces is vital to the stability of Somalia and to the State-building effort as such. Training is an essential element. The European Union is studying the option of providing assistance to this end, in addition to various bilateral activities and initiatives.

We also recall our contributions to the international fight against piracy off the coasts of Somalia through Operation Atalanta. Legal measures must also be taken to prevent impunity for pirates in Somalia and elsewhere in the region.

The Djibouti process remains our best hope for peace in Somalia. Intensified and urgent efforts are now needed to save the process from dissolving. We urge all parties in Somalia to join this effort. We also reaffirm our support for the International Contact Group, under the leadership of Special Representative Ahmedou Ould Abdallah.

In parallel with addressing the current crisis, we must seek enhanced international coordination and a more comprehensive long-term strategy for supporting Somalia. Such an approach should link security and development in a coherent State-building effort. It should be based on Somali ownership and take into account the needs of the entire Somali territory.

For its part, the European Union will consider options for enhanced engagement — including training, capacity-building and regional cooperation — ahead of the EU ministerial meeting later this month. The European Union stands ready to continue to support Somalia and its people.

The President: After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council reiterates its previous resolutions and presidential statements on Somalia, in particular its resolution 1872 (2009), which reaffirmed the Djibouti Agreement as the basis for a resolution of the conflict in Somalia.
>
> "The Security Council reiterates its support for the Djibouti peace process outlined in the Transitional Federal Charter, which provides a framework for reaching a lasting political solution in Somalia. The Security Council reaffirms its support for the Transitional Federal Government as the legitimate authority in Somalia under the Transitional Federal Charter and notes the declaration on 22 June of a state of emergency as a result of the recent renewal in fighting led by Al-Shabaab and other violent opposition groups, which constitutes an attempt to remove that legitimate authority by force. The Security Council also reiterates its support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, for his efforts towards advancing the political process in Somalia.

"The Security Council condemns the recent attacks on the Transitional Federal Government and the civilian population by armed groups and foreign fighters who undermine peace and stability in Somalia. The Security Council reaffirms its demand of 15 May 2009 that violent opposition groups immediately end their offensive, put down their arms, renounce violence and join reconciliation efforts. The Security Council condemns the flow of foreign fighters into Somalia.

"The Security Council deplores the loss of life in Somalia and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, which has resulted in increased flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, threatening stability in the region. The Security Council calls on all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular to respect the security of civilians, humanitarian workers and AMISOM personnel.

"The Security Council reaffirms that Somalia's long-term security rests with the effective development by the TFG of the National Security Force and the Somali Police Force, in the framework of the Djibouti Agreement and in line with a national security strategy, and urges the international community to support the Somali security institutions, including through training and equipping.

"The Security Council commends the contribution of AMISOM to lasting peace and stability in Somalia, expresses its continued appreciation for the commitment of troops to AMISOM by the Governments of Uganda and Burundi, and condemns any hostilities towards AMISOM. In this context, the Security Council welcomes the decision by the African Union summit at Sirte on 3 July to increase AMISOM's strength to its mandated troop levels and its call for AU member States to provide the necessary military and police personnel.

"The Security Council takes note of the decision of the African Union summit in Sirte, calling on the Council to impose sanctions against those, including Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups engaged in undermining peace and reconciliation in Somalia and regional stability. The Security Council is deeply concerned in this regard and will consider expeditiously what action to take against any party undermining the Djibouti peace process, based on all available evidence, including that submitted to the Monitoring Group and the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 751 (1992)."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/19.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6159

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6159th meeting

Friday, 10 July 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Rugunda	(Uganda)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Twenty-eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2009/335)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-39962 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Twenty-eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2009/335)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Doss to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the twenty-eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, contained in document S/2009/335.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alan Doss. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Doss (*spoke in French*): Three months ago, I presented to members the twenty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (S/2009/160) (*see S/PV.6104*). Since then, significant progress has been made in the two main processes under way since the beginning of the year: the integration of Congolese armed groups into the national army and the operations against foreign armed groups. It must be recognized, however, that those two processes have also been accompanied by grave humanitarian consequences for the civilian population. Under our mandate, their protection is at the heart of our concerns. MONUC has thus enhanced its efforts to improve civilian protection in a conflict that extends over vast areas of operation.

We are working closely with the Government to resolve serious problems regarding logistics and the command, training and discipline of the troops involved in the operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Those problems are the cause of many abuses against civilians by elements of the army and are reducing the effectiveness of the operations against those foreign armed groups. But the fact that these operations are increasingly being carried out in areas to which it is difficult to gain access has disproportionately increased the logistical needs not only of MONUC, but also of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), whose material and financial means are very limited.

(*spoke in English*)

The international community has consistently advocated action to dismantle armed groups operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such action is now under way, but the humanitarian impact has, understandably, raised many concerns. A spate of reprisal attacks by the FDLR and the LRA have caused new population displacements and serious human rights violations by those armed groups, as well as by undisciplined FARDC soldiers, which has created growing apprehension in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the international community. We take those concerns very seriously and have addressed them with the

Government at various levels. MONUC conducted a joint evaluation of Operation Kimia II with the FARDC in June, and the Force Commander is working with the FARDC commanders to resolve problems identified during that evaluation.

These problems have to be considered in the context of the understandings reached between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Those agreements led to the end of the rebellion by the Congrès national pour la défense du people (CNDP) and to the commitment to determined action against the FDLR. While those developments offered the prospect that the recurring cycle of violence in the Kivus could be ended, they obliged the Congolese Government to quickly integrate into the army large numbers of untrained and inadequately equipped troops and to launch a campaign of considerable complexity to capitalize on the early gains of the joint Rwanda Defence Forces-FARDC operation against the FDLR in February of this year. Without this continuity between operations Umoja Wetu and Kimia II, the FDLR would have been able to reorganize and to reoccupy areas that they had been pushed out of. That has been prevented in North Kivu. In South Kivu, operations have just started, but already the FDLR has been dislodged from some of its traditional strongholds.

As a key part of the strategy to deal with the FDLR, we have sought to enhance the protection of civilians. MONUC has established 35 military bases in North Kivu, many of which are in very remote areas where operations against the FDLR are ongoing. Those bases have allowed for close monitoring of the operations and rapid intervention in a number of instances. However, the manning of so many bases also means that our resources are stretched thin, and the capacity of the force to send significant reinforcements to new trouble spots is limited. That imposes increasingly difficult choices about how and where to respond to new threats. The arrival of the additional forces authorized under resolution 1843 (2008) will help alleviate the pressures. Some of those troops will be used as a reserve force to enable the Mission to respond to multiple crises in various locations.

In the meantime, we have reinforced our North Kivu brigade by redeploying units from Ituri and Katanga. Currently, two thirds of our troops are in the Kivus. Another 20 per cent are in Orientale province, essentially in the districts of Ituri, Haut Uélé and Bas Uélé, where we are still facing security challenges from residual elements of the militia of the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri and the LRA. Additional troops are now being redeployed from Kinshasa to bolster the operations against the LRA.

In the two Uélé districts, we have seen a number of attacks, with renewed abductions of civilians, although at a lower level than a few months ago. MONUC has established new bases in those districts to better support the FARDC in its operations against the LRA. We have created coordination mechanisms with humanitarian actors on the ground with a view to facilitating access and the delivery of assistance. We are escorting humanitarian convoys on key roads and securing zones for air drops. The FARDC has increased its presence in the area to more than 6,000 troops. With the assistance of military intelligence provided by Uganda and information gathered from local sources, Operation Rudia — the operation against the LRA — aims to reduce the threat posed by that group to civilians. The goal is to track down the last of these Ugandan rebels before they can regenerate their forces with new abductees.

I have already reported to the Council on the deployment of Joint Protection Teams (JPTs) composed of civilian personnel from various sections of the Mission. Those teams have now undertaken a total of 30 protection and assessment missions, mostly but not exclusively in North Kivu. Civil-military cooperation has improved significantly with the assistance of these teams, which have helped create awareness of local and ethnic dynamics that contribute to violence. Despite limited civilian personnel and logistical capacities, the JPTs have also been instrumental in anticipating and preventing attacks and in improving the rapid response capacity of MONUC, as well as that of the FARDC.

Furthermore, MONUC has established an early warning and rapid response cell in the Mission. This cell systematically monitors operations and their humanitarian consequences. It analyses the patterns of FDLR and LRA attacks, and tracks human rights violations by FARDC soldiers in order to better identify particularly problematic commanders or units and to advocate for disciplinary action. This monitoring also allows us to obtain information on units that perform well and provide them with more targeted support.

Overall, cooperation between the FARDC and MONUC has deepened and joint operations centres are now functioning relatively well in Goma and Bukavu. Joint coordination centres have been established in the three operational zones within North and South Kivu. The FARDC itself is making an effort to improve its public outreach so as to create a better understanding in local communities of the rationale for operations.

We continue to stress the critical importance of integrating the protection of civilians into the planning of operations at the strategic and tactical levels. This was a key feature of the joint evaluation meeting held in June with the Minister of Defence and the FARDC chief of staff. They presented a candid assessment of the impact of FDLR reprisal attacks, as well as exactions by undisciplined FARDC soldiers, which they acknowledged. Some of the FARDC discipline problems stem from delayed salary payments. Others are due to the fact that many integrated ex-combatants — especially those from militias — maintain loyalty to their former commanders. I am very pleased to report, however, that the Government and the army command have taken measures to reinforce military justice, and that several FARDC soldiers accused of crimes in the course of the current operations have now been tried and sentenced.

We have pressed for the removal of notorious commanders within the FARDC, including those on the list that the Council presented to the Government during its visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May. I can report that President Kabila has given instructions for their immediate removal from command positions, while the Defence Minister has instructed the military prosecutor to initiate legal procedures against them. We shall continue our advocacy on this issue, and we have made it very clear that we cannot engage in or support operations with units that show blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, or where there is a significant risk that they may do so.

A particularly important aspect of the protection of civilians is the fight against sexual and gender-based violence. This scourge has accompanied the conflicts in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, but we have also seen violence against women and girls in provinces that have been at peace for some years. The Government and international partners have adopted a comprehensive strategy on which I reported in my last presentation. We now have to ensure that all relevant actors implement it through decisive action, including through the judiciary and corrections systems. The military must sanction soldiers found guilty of crimes involving sexual violence, and hold commanders responsible for the behaviour of their troops. President Kabila has declared a zero-tolerance policy in this respect and has instructed the Minister of Defence to personally meet with all commanders in the field to underline their personal accountability for troops under their command.

While I do not want to downplay the problems faced by Operations Kimia II and Rudia II, we should not overlook the fact that many FARDC soldiers are conducting challenging operations in particularly difficult circumstances, often with minimal support and with remarkable determination. More than 50 soldiers have lost their lives in the campaign against the FDLR, and more than 30 have been seriously wounded.

It is too soon to make a definitive assessment of the ongoing operations against the armed groups, but we can draw some initial conclusions. Operation Iron Stone and the long struggle to dismantle the remaining armed groups in southern Ituri, seem to be approaching the home stretch. Most of Ituri, which was the most troublesome area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 2003 to 2005, when many thousands died and when 2 million were displaced, is today largely pacified. The remnant militia in southern Ituri represent more a form of localized banditry than a serious challenge to State authority. We are hopeful that combined military pressure and community dialogue will resolve that problem once and for all.

In North Kivu, the FDLR has been reduced to fairly isolated pockets in Rutshuru and Masisi territories, but significant numbers of combatants are still present in Walikale and Lubero territories where we have seen a string of particularly vicious attacks around Kanyabayonga and surrounding villages. Operations in those areas are complicated by illegal trading networks, in which some FARDC elements and their dependents may be involved. Some FARDC elements have also carried out exactions in those communities and local populations therefore often distrust the newly integrated brigade.

Targeted military pressure, allied to an enhanced effort to attract new defections of FDLR cadres, is needed to further reduce the capacity of the FDLR and to diminish the accompanying threat to civilian

populations. We are currently reviewing our approach to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement in order to encourage further defections, especially among young soldiers who were not implicated in the genocide. Altogether, almost 10,000 Rwandans have been repatriated since January 2009, of whom 1,206 were combatants. That is a significant increase over 2008, when 1,300 FDLR combatants and dependents in total, were repatriated by MONUC during the course of the whole year.

In South Kivu, the FARDC has deployed as many as 24,000 soldiers into areas where an FDLR presence has been reported. Cordon and search operations and offensive actions began in June, in Kalehe and Shabunda territories. During the Kimia II deployment phase, the FDLR has, however, launched reprisal attacks against civilians and raided defensive positions of the FARDC. In some areas, ex-CNDP units were deliberately targeted, and some of those units got embroiled in local conflicts, with unfortunate ethnic connotations. This has tended to undermine the cohesion of the FARDC troops in those areas, and some former Mayi-Mayi combatants have left the army and reactivated community protection militias.

The FDLR is apparently trying to divide FARDC loyalties and seek new alliances with remaining or re-emerging local armed groups. It is taking advantage of the fact that many commanders of Operation Kimia II are ex-CNDP officers, some of whom may have committed serious human rights violations in South Kivu and are consequently viewed with suspicion by local populations. This is a threat not only to operation Kimia II, but also to the integration process. It would be advisable, therefore, for the FARDC to rotate some of those commanders and troops from those areas, so that they are less likely to be associated with past events.

All these developments are an indication of the challenges faced by Operation Kimia II in South Kivu, which will be the decisive arena in the campaign against the FDLR. The bulk of FDLR combatants are present in seven out of eight territories in South Kivu. Dismantling the FDLR will require a multidimensional approach, comprising a combination of sustained military pressure and enhanced efforts and incentives to induce the younger elements of the FDLR to surrender or defect.

More determined action against the FDLR leaders in exile is also essential in our view. As members have seen from the most recent report of the Group of Experts which is monitoring the arms embargo (see S/2008/832), those leaders, operating from abroad, continue to maintain contact with commanders on the ground. We have reports from FDLR defectors that they are involved in planning operations. MONUC is currently exploring legal options for Member States to prosecute those leaders for illegal acts committed in the DRC. While the FDLR has not launched any serious attack against Rwanda for several years, it continues to commit atrocities against Congolese civilians on a large scale.

Several LRA commanders have been captured or killed since the beginning of Operation Rudia. LRA bases in the Caramba National Park have been destroyed, and the logistical support structure has been disrupted. According to FARDC figures, 109 LRA combatants were killed and 115 arrested as of late June.

While these are significant achievements, it will be some time before the LRA threat is completely neutralized. We are particularly concerned about the fate of hundreds of children and young men and women who have been abducted by the LRA, not only in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but also in Central African Republic and Southern Sudan since late last year.

Accounts from escapees indicate that the LRA is training some of them to fight and to replenish their ranks. The LRA has also extended its presence over a vast area from Ituri to the western Central African Republic and into Southern Sudan. In some areas, that has provoked the emergence of local self-defence groups akin to the Mayi-Mayi in the Kivus. The LRA therefore remains a serious security challenge that will require the sustained commitment of all Governments and United Nations missions in the subregion, if the group is to be effectively contained and neutralized.

We therefore welcome the initiative of the Ugandan and Democratic Republic of Congo chiefs of defence staff to invite their counterparts from the Central African Republic as well as MONUC and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) for regular consultations on operation Rudia. MONUC has established informal contacts with our sister missions UNMIS and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support

Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) to exchange information on LRA activities on a regular basis.

We have also reinforced and continue to reinforce our presence in the LRA-affected areas, but the effectiveness of military operations would be greatly enhanced if we could get access to better intelligence on these armed groups. We invite Member States to share such intelligence with us.

The implementation of the 23 March agreements between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Kivu armed groups is proceeding steadily if somewhat slowly. The Government has promulgated the amnesty law, a first group of civilian prisoners related to the CNDP have been released, and the CNDP has been registered as a political party. MONUC has conducted an assessment of the CNDP war wounded and has provided emergency assistance to some of them. However, the military integration of CNDP, the Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais (PARECO) and the Mayi-Mayi militias continues to be hampered by delayed salary payments and difficulties in streamlining the command structure. Some of these armed groups complain of unequal treatment. We will continue to work closely with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, former President Obasanjo, to facilitate the implementation of the other provisions of the 23 March agreements.

While we are supporting the current army integration process, I would like to underline once again the critical importance of comprehensive security sector reform, including the vetting of security forces. The Government circulated a new draft for army reform earlier this year, and presented a revised proposal enriched with comments and recommendations from international partners. This revised plan has been approved by the Conseil supérieur de la défense and submitted to parliament. The Minister of Defence has informed me that he will convene shortly a meeting of international partners to discuss the way forward on military reform. Personally, I believe a consortium of the willing will be essential to assist the Government in this reform process, which, of course, will extend long beyond the life of MONUC itself.

In the meantime, I have conveyed a set of proposals to the Minister of Defence for immediate action to consolidate the integration of armed groups in the Kivus. We would discourage, however, the integration of additional militias into an already plethoric FARDC. I believe that we have reached the point of saturation. The Government cannot afford or successfully integrate a huge number of new ex-combatants, which in turn would tend to create new demands for integration from other groups that emerge as a result.

The FARDC chief of staff has informed us that, on instruction from President Kabila, he will send two brigades for training by MONUC at our centres at Luberizi and Nyaleke, starting in October. A third training centre for an additional brigade is to be opened near Kindu in January 2010. Another two brigades could enter the training cycle in May 2010.

I am grateful to the Government of Tanzania for agreeing to send 200 military trainers to join MONUC; they will provide six-month training courses for the FARDC. The Congolese army therefore aims at training 15 battalions with the help of MONUC up to the end of October 2010, which I hope will greatly facilitate the integration process. If this can be achieved, and depending, of course, on some other developments, it would facilitate the downsizing of MONUC's own forces, as the FARDC could then progressively take over security tasks now carried out by MONUC.

We are also encouraging the Government to submit to parliament, without further delay, the framework law on police reform, without which the ongoing reform of the police will be unable to progress much further. Reforms are also urgently needed in the justice and penitentiary sector, especially to improve prison conditions, which generally are deplorable.

The Prime Minister formally presented the stabilization plan for the East to international partners on 9 June in Kinshasa, and we are awaiting a presidential decree establishing its steering committee and provincial coordination mechanisms, which subsume the previous structures of the Amani programme. The plan builds on and incorporates the earlier work done by the United Nations Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, which the Council had mandated us to prepare, and is the result of a substantial joint planning exercise involving Government ministries, international agencies and bilateral partners.

The plan is an important tool for the Government to mobilize critical resources to consolidate security, expand State administration and create employment in areas most affected by past and sometimes ongoing conflict. The plan has been costed at $1.2 billion, of which $400 million has already been made available through the United Nations Security and Stabilization Support Strategy and the Humanitarian Action Plan. Additional resources can be expected as soon as our international partners begin to see results of the implementation of existing programmes. This is extremely important at a time when the Government is struggling with serious budgetary constraints, and we hope that this opportunity will not be lost.

I am pleased to report that several aspects of the Stabilization Strategy are already at an advanced stage of implementation, notably the rehabilitation of six key transport routes in the Kivus and Ituri; training and deployment of the police, including the proximity police requested by CNDP, and the judiciary; and the preparations for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I would like to take this opportunity express my sincere appreciation to all donors and partners that are contributing to the stabilization plan and the Humanitarian Action Plan.

Unfortunately for the country as a whole, the economic situation remains very difficult. Several partners, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union, have extended emergency assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help it weather the current financial crisis. However, in order to effectively capitalize on this support, the Government should take decisive action to improve the management of public finances and to address the continuing lack of transparency and accountability, which has seriously hampered socio-economic recovery. In his Independence Day address this year, President Kabila openly criticized corruption and mismanagement and signalled a new resolve to tackle these major obstacles to the country's development and its reform agenda.

The Independent Electoral Commission started the voter registration update as planned, on 7 June in Kinshasa. This event led to a considerable mobilization of the major political parties, including at least one that boycotted the electoral processes of 2005 and 2006. Despite this growing momentum, national authorities still have not provided the Commission with an official list of constituencies, which puts into question the timely launch of the voter registration update in the rest of the country, which is scheduled to start in August.

The Electoral Commission and MONUC are currently exploring administrative options that are politically acceptable to obtain provisional territorial delimitations in order to move ahead, while waiting on passage of the law by parliament. We are aware, however, that in some provinces this territorial delimitation is a politically sensitive issue and has already provoked some local tensions. MONUC continues to monitor these developments, both at national and provincial levels.

While the delayed adoption of the enabling legislation is unfortunate, it does not yet mean that the local elections cannot be held in early 2010. Nevertheless, the time frame is narrowing, which in turn makes it increasingly difficult to ensure that the necessary logistical support will be available on time.

To assist the Government in curbing the illegal exploitation and export of natural resources, MONUC has trained military and civilian staff to carry out the tasks mandated by resolution 1856 (2008). MONUC continues to provide considerable support to the Group of Experts monitoring the arms embargo, as mandated by the Council, and the Mission has participated in several workshops with bilateral partners where options to tackle illegal exploitation have been explored.

MONUC has also reinforced its deployment and patrol activities in and around the Kahuzi-Biega and Virunga National Parks in the Kivus, where poaching and illegal charcoal-burning, as well as the presence of armed elements, threaten those World Heritage sanctuaries. The FDLR is the main culprit, but it is apparent that the lucrative charcoal trade also benefits from the complicity of elements in the FARDC and local authorities in the Kivus. It should be noted that Rwanda is one of the main importers of this charcoal.

I want to express my gratitude to Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan and Tanzania, which are to deploy the additional troops and police personnel authorized under earlier resolutions of the Council, including special forces and a contingent of trainers. I also thank Belgium for providing a C-130 military transport

aircraft and Uruguay for making two military helicopters available.

We look forward to seeing the additional troops and police arrive, but it remains necessary for the troops to have the required aviation, communication and logistical assets to ensure the effectiveness of their mission. I therefore repeat our request for 16 additional military utility helicopters and an additional C-130 transport aircraft. I also want to re-emphasize that obtaining aerial imaging and signals technologies to track LRA and FDLR leaders and their forces would be most helpful to us.

During the Council's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May, I provided a comprehensive briefing on MONUC's planned reconfiguration, as had been requested by the Council. The Council is therefore aware that the Mission is preparing for a gradual transition in the western part of the country, pursuant to resolution 1856 (2008). An assessment team comprising Government, MONUC and United Nations country team participants visited Bandundu province last month. Similar teams will make assessments in the other western provinces so that, by September, we can provide plans and recommendations for the reconfiguration and, where appropriate, the handover. That will not be a simple or easy task. Please remember that the country team and other partners are not strongly represented in many of the western provinces either.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, we will elaborate together with the country team an integrated strategic framework defining common objectives for the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so that we have a cohesive vision and approach to the transition and beyond. That framework will detail the progressive handover of MONUC tasks in the western part of the country on the basis of the recommendations that I have just referred to. I expect that the outcome of the reconfiguration exercise will be fully reflected in that framework.

(*spoke in French*)

We are now at a critical stage in our support for the simultaneous efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to integrate Congolese armed groups and to neutralize the threat posed by foreign groups. We are well aware of the stakes involved. Given new acts of violence against civilians, in particular sexual violence, we are forced to adapt our strategy and to do everything possible to strengthen our role in the protection of civilians. To that end, I have reached an agreement with the Government to carry out a second assessment of Operation Kimia upon my return to the country.

Nevertheless, it is critical that we not lose sight of our goal, namely, neutralizing once and for all the threat posed by armed groups destabilizing the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and causing tremendous suffering to the inhabitants of the Kivus and Orientale province. Backing off halfway through could have devastating consequences, both for the provinces concerned and at the regional level, where foreign armed groups have been a major factor in tensions and even instability.

We should pool our efforts to complete that task as part of a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that takes advantage of all the tools available: military, diplomatic, legal, socio-economic and political. MONUC has an important role to play in that strategy to support the Government. However, without the Council's material, political and diplomatic support, we will not be able to succeed. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC count on the Council's support in the weeks and months to come to re-establish lasting peace in the eastern part of the country and throughout the region.

The President: I thank Mr. Alan Doss for his briefing.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6160

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6160th meeting

Friday, 10 July 2009, 1.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Rugunda	(Uganda)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Long Zhou
	Costa Rica	Ms. Villalobos
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Veyssière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Elkrekshi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2009/332)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-39968 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2009/332)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/332, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction continued progress in the overall peace and security situation in West Africa. The Council especially welcomes positive developments in the areas of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding, as well as improvements in governance and rule of law.

"The Security Council, however, notes with deep concern the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, undemocratic seizures of power, and, recalling the statement of its President dated 5 May 2009, stresses again the importance of expeditiously restoring constitutional order including through open and transparent elections.

"The Security Council reiterates its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and recalls that cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, can improve collective security.

"The Council welcomes the continuing important efforts of ECOWAS, in synergy with the African Union, the United Nations and the wider international community, consistent with Security Council resolutions and decisions, to settle conflicts and promote human rights, democracy, rule of law and constitutional order in West Africa.

"The Security Council also expresses its concerns over the fact that the progress achieved remains fragile. The Council is concerned in particular by growing or emerging threats to security in West Africa, notably terrorist activities in the Sahel band, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, and illicit drug trafficking, which pose a threat to regional stability with possible impact on international security.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of addressing the illicit drug trafficking and criminal activities by an approach of shared responsibility, and encourages the efforts by West African States to combat illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, especially through the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The Council welcomes West African States' continued leadership in implementing this Plan of Action and UNOWA's role in support of the implementation of this Regional Plan of Action, and takes note of the proposal to strengthen its capacity.

"The Security Council also commends the joint action of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNOWA, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and INTERPOL to help implement the ECOWAS Plan of Action against illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, and underlines the importance for them to continue to strengthen their partnership on these issues. It also commends national and international partners such as the European Union for their support to ECOWAS in the fight against drug trafficking in West Africa.

"The Security Council stresses the importance to take into account a comprehensive strategy of conflict resolution and crisis prevention while addressing the cross-border issues and the regional challenges. The Council supports the regional efforts to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to achieve the security sector reform.

"The Security Council expresses its concern on the impact of the global economic crisis on West African economies, since the region is already confronted with development challenges such as rising food insecurity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and youth unemployment. The Council encourages continued engagement of financial institutions and development partners to mitigate the adverse effects of the decline in economic growth and other destabilizing factors in West Africa.

"The Security Council recognizes and commends the important role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the United Nations Office for West Africa in promoting and strengthening a regional and integrated approach to cross-border issues, as well as helping consolidate peace and security, democracy and the rule of law, and requests the Secretary-General, through his Special Representative, to continue to develop further the active cooperation existing between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/20.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6161

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6161 st meeting

Monday, 13 July 2009, 11.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Rugunda	(Uganda)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-40115 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Myanmar in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Swe (Myanmar) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief its members at their request on my visit to Myanmar from 3 to 4 July 2009 at the invitation of the Government of Myanmar. I wish to thank all interested States members of this Council and in the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Myanmar for supporting my decision to visit Myanmar at this time, and also for supporting my efforts in the context of my good offices.

Whereas the objective of my first visit, last year, was to unblock the humanitarian situation caused by Cyclone Nargis, my objective this time was to engage Myanmar's senior leadership directly on a number of serious and long-standing concerns that I believe cannot be left unaddressed at this critical stage of Myanmar's transition. At a time when there is much attention to the ongoing trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and on the eve of Myanmar's first elections in 20 years, it was necessary for me to raise those concerns and offer the help of the United Nations in advancing national reconciliation, democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable development.

At the outset, let me say that the refusal of the senior leadership to allow me to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was not only a deep disappointment but also a major lost opportunity for Myanmar. While this should not define our efforts, allowing such a meeting would have sent a constructive and conciliatory signal both inside and outside Myanmar. However, the United Nations engagement with Myanmar is broad and complex, encompassing as it does a range of fundamental issues of concern for the future of the country, which I was able to address during this visit.

In my two meetings with Senior General Than Shwe and an additional meeting with the Prime Minister, General Thein Sein, I discussed extensively the need for Myanmar to take meaningful steps on the five-point agenda developed in the context of my good offices, as well as in humanitarian areas. I made specific proposals, with a particular focus on three outstanding concerns that, if left unaddressed, could undermine any confidence in Myanmar's political process: first, the release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; secondly, the resumption of a substantive dialogue between the Government and the opposition; and thirdly, the creation of conditions conducive to credible and legitimate elections.

From experience, the United Nations has learned that elections can be unifying or divisive, depending on the level of buy-in and the quality of the process. Addressing these three concerns, including with the support of the United Nations, is therefore essential to ensuring that the political process is inclusive and serves the interests of all the people of Myanmar in a way that can be broadly accepted by the international community.

Meeting with Myanmar's registered political parties and ethnic ceasefire groups allowed me to listen to their views and concerns in this regard, which I also shared with the authorities. However, I also encouraged the two groups to remain constructive in the political process. Any successful transition will require overcoming the country's twin legacies of political deadlock and civil conflict. It is in the interests of all to ensure that any gains made so far become irreversible. While the Government has a primary obligation to address the concerns of all stakeholders, every

stakeholder has a role to play and a responsibility to assume in the interests of the nation.

On the humanitarian front, I saw for myself the progress made in one year in the recovery and reconstruction of the cyclone-affected region, thanks to unprecedented cooperation between Myanmar, the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In all my meetings, I stressed the need to consolidate and build on such efforts to ensure that assistance in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta is expedited and that humanitarian access is expanded to reach all vulnerable groups across the country. Just as the international community cannot hold humanitarian assistance hostage to political considerations, there is no justification for the Government's allowing humanitarian access to some of its people but not to others.

Furthermore, my visit also presented an occasion to address Myanmar's development challenge. Here, too, we know from experience that peace and security can be affected by underlying socio-economic conditions. Accordingly, I proposed to the senior leadership that it enhance cooperation with the United Nations in order to address, through a broad-based process involving all sectors of society, the pressing development needs facing the country. Empowering the people to participate in their country's development is equally important for stability, democracy and prosperity, and for ensuring that Myanmar fully benefits from and contributes to the regional and global economy.

My visit offered the clearest signal of the United Nations commitment to working with the Government and people of Myanmar to address issues of fundamental importance for the prospects of durable peace, democracy and development. While I stand ready to work to that end with all concerned, Myanmar stands to gain much from engaging meaningfully with the United Nations. To be able to convey this message clearly and directly to the highest level of Myanmar's leadership is a rare chance for the international community to be heard.

Here, as has been observed, what is more important is not so much what I came back with but what I left behind with the authorities. I have made clear my expectation and that of the international community that the Government needs to deliver on the promise to make the 2010 elections inclusive, free and fair and to take necessary steps on my specific proposals in the very near future. In this connection, Senior General Than Shwe has pledged to make the elections free and fair. But I said then and reiterate today that it is up to the Myanmar authorities to translate this into concrete action, to ensure the inclusiveness and credibility of the process and to demonstrate Myanmar's commitment to cooperation with the international community. Like all other Member States, the more Myanmar works in partnership with the United Nations, the more it affirms its sovereignty.

Before leaving Myanmar, I had the chance to publicly reiterate all my messages in a keynote speech to a large and diverse audience in Yangon. This was an unprecedented opportunity to ask openly the question that is before Myanmar's stakeholders today: How much longer can Myanmar afford to wait — and at what cost — for national reconciliation, democratic transition and full respect for human rights? My message, addressed to the international community as much as to the Government and people of Myanmar, was twofold. First, while Myanmar has a unique and complex history, the challenges it faces as a country in transition are neither exceptional nor insurmountable. Secondly, none of the challenges facing Myanmar today — political, humanitarian or development — can be addressed on their own, and failure to address them with equal attention could undermine the prospects for durable peace, democracy and prosperity.

This address was also an opportunity to stress my commitment, and that of the international community as a whole, to continued engagement. I clearly stated that Myanmar was not alone. In Myanmar as elsewhere, the United Nations works for the people — their rights, their well-being and their dignity. It is not an option; it is our responsibility. We cannot give up. The continued support of United Nations Members for my good offices efforts and their engagement — particularly that of neighbouring countries and ASEAN members — with the Myanmar authorities have therefore become even more important and necessary.

I welcome the continued support given to my efforts by the leaders of the G-8 last week, and their statement that they are "prepared to respond positively to substantive political progress undertaken by Myanmar". I also welcome the reiterated strong support extended to my good offices and personal engagement by the Group of Friends on Myanmar.

Now that I have conveyed in the clearest terms what is expected of Myanmar's leaders, it is up to them to respond positively in their country's own interests. As I mentioned in my speech, ultimately it is the people of Myanmar who will bear the cost of any lack of engagement and cooperation on the part of their Government with the United Nations and the international community. That is why Myanmar's leaders have a responsibility not only to their own people, but also to the members of the international community, to respond to the proposals I made on their behalf.

The choice for Myanmar's leaders in the coming days and weeks will be between meeting that responsibility in the interests of all concerned or failing their own people and each member of the international community. The world is now watching closely whether they will choose to act in the best interests of their country or to ignore our concerns and expectations and the needs of their people.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to make a statement at this briefing. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts to support Myanmar's democratization process and for his comprehensive briefing today. The Secretary-General's recent visit to Myanmar was his second in just over a year, and Under-Secretary-General Gambari's ninth. It is noteworthy that, during the Secretary-General's visit to Myanmar, we did our utmost to accommodate his requests, although we were unable to arrange the requested meeting Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

It is an established protocol practice that our Head of State receives foreign dignitaries only once during their visits. However, at the request of the Secretary-General, Senior General Than Shwe received the Secretary-General twice. During their meetings, the Secretary-General expressed the views of the United Nations and the international community. Senior General Than Shwe thoroughly explained the developments in Myanmar's political process and highlighted the two most important priorities of the Government at this moment — to hand over State power to a civilian Government after the 2010 general elections and to lay a good foundation for future social and economic development. He also assured the Secretary-General that the 2010 general elections will be free, fair, credible and arranged to ensure the participation of all citizens.

With regard to the Secretary-General's request to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, although our Head of State himself was willing to arrange the meeting, we regret our inability to accommodate the request, as the Special Court has independent jurisdiction over the matter. It is the discretion and position of the Special Court not to accommodate those who could have influence over its judgments. Our inability to arrange the meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was clearly explained before and during the Secretary-General's visit.

Arrangements were made for the Secretary-General to meet with the leaders and representatives of 10 officially registered political parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and former armed groups. We also even made an arrangement for the Secretary-General to meet separately with the representatives of the NLD, although such a meeting was not included in the original programme. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and thanks to the Secretary-General for encouraging the political parties and former armed groups to participate in the national reconsolidation process.

As requested by the Secretary-General, a public "Thank you event" was arranged by the Myanmar Government, although we were fully aware that such public meetings have not taken place during the Secretary-General's recent visits to certain Member countries. Moreover, we anticipated that Secretary-General might touch on areas and issues that were not on the agenda of the event. However, with the aim of demonstrating our cooperation with the United Nations and of respecting the wishes of the Secretary-General, we arranged that unprecedented public meeting. We invited those whom the Secretary-General wished to invite, and cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials of the Government also attended that event to honour the Secretary-General.

During his visit, the Secretary-General discussed at length with the Prime Minster the social and economic development of Myanmar. As a developing country, Myanmar has been making untiring efforts for its economic and social development. However, some

countries have imposed economic sanctions instead of providing assistance and cooperation. Regrettably, official development assistance for Myanmar is less than $3 per capita, which is minimal compared to that received by similar countries. During the meeting, the Prime Minister highlighted the fact that such policies towards Myanmar hinder the social and economic development of the country and have mainly impacted people at the grassroots level. It would be more constructive and conducive to our democratization and development efforts if the international community were to view the situation of Myanmar in a wider perspective.

Despite these obstacles, the Myanmar Government has been striving to stabilize the situation in the political, social and economic fields with our own resources. We appreciate the Secretary-General's remark on Myanmar Government's endeavours to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, control HIV/AIDS, combat human trafficking and eradicate opium poppy cultivation.

During his visit, the Secretary-General also visited the Ayeyarwaddy Delta region, which was struck by Cyclone Nargis a year ago, to observe the construction of cyclone shelters and other reconstruction works carried out jointly by the Myanmar Government, United Nations agencies and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out that the response to Cyclone Nargis proved the value of engagement and the unprecedented cooperation between Myanmar, the United Nations and ASEAN through the Tripartite Core Group, with the support of the international community.

With regard to the success of the visit, the Myanmar Government intends to implement all appropriate recommendations that the Secretary-General proposed. At the request of the Secretary-General, the Myanmar Government is proceeding to grant amnesty to prisoners on humanitarian grounds and with a view to enabling them to participate in the 2010 general elections. Moreover, with regard to the National Economic Forum, the Government will cooperate with the United Nations in the agricultural, livestock and fishery sectors for the betterment of people at the grass-roots level.

With regard to the offer of technical assistance in elections, Myanmar will cooperate with the United Nations if technical assistance is necessary for the 2010 general elections. The State will enact a political party registration law and election law in due time. Myanmar is resolved to implement everything it possibly can with a view to facilitating the smooth attainment of the democratic goals it has set for the nation and its people.

Myanmar's acceptance of the good offices role of the Secretary-General and its active cooperation in the process, as well as the Secretary-General's second visit to Myanmar in just over a year, are important milestones of cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations. We are of the view that the Secretary-General's visit to Myanmar was successful. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's remark that his inability to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should not be seen as the only benchmark for the success or failure of his visit.

Myanmar today is steadfastly proceeding on its chosen path to democracy. The challenges faced by Myanmar are complex and multifaceted. When one considers Myanmar's geopolitical location, one sees that it is surrounded by countries with different political systems, cultures and religions and that over 40 per cent of the world's population resides in our five neighbours. Myanmar itself is a multi-ethnic and multireligious country. Therefore, we must be neutral and harmonize with all our neighbours for the stability of the region. We have to consider, inter alia, the various historical, geopolitical and multi-ethnic backgrounds. Exerting undue pressure from the outside without fully comprehending the challenges faced by Myanmar will not be conducive to the country's home-grown political process.

It cannot be stressed enough that no one can address the complex challenges that Myanmar is currently facing better than the Government and the peoples of Myanmar. We are making significant strides in the national reconsolidation and democratization process. Thus, Myanmar is nearly in the final stage of achieving our ultimate goal. Myanmar is not a threat to international peace and security, so no Security Council action is warranted.

I should like to close by reaffirming our commitment to continuing our cooperation with the United Nations and with the good offices role of the Secretary-General. The continued support, understanding and cooperation of the United Nations and the

international community will best assist our endeavour to establish a democratic nation.

The President: I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I should like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing on his visit to Burma. It required courage and determination on his part to proceed with the visit. His decision had our full support; the wider international community supported it too. That support has been reflected in many recent statements, most notably the communiqué on Burma issued at the Group of Eight summit on 9 July, which the Secretary-General mentioned.

We believe that, by going to Burma, the Secretary-General demonstrated in the clearest possible way the commitment of the United Nations to the progress of democracy, human rights and economic development in that country. The people of Burma will certainly have taken heart from the strong leadership that the Secretary-General has shown.

We also welcome the unambiguous messages on the need for political reform that the Secretary-General delivered directly to Senior General Than Shwe and the leadership of the State Peace and Development Council — messages which set out the international community's concerns and which the Council has expressed through its presidential statements. Those statements have made clear what needs to happen, including the release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the resumption of an enhanced, time-bound dialogue among the Government, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political parties and ethnic groups, facilitated by the United Nations.

We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General was able to meet with ceasefire groups and all 10 of the registered political parties, including the National League for Democracy, but we echo the Secretary-General's disappointment at the Government's decision not to allow him to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself. It is a measure of their obstinacy and of their lack of commitment to genuine progress that they failed to grant that request, particularly at a time when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is subject to a trial widely acknowledged to be a travesty of justice. As the only political figure in the country to have received a popular democratic mandate, she has a central role to play in the future of a democratic Burma. Her treatment by the regime is not the only criterion by which the regime should be judged, but it demonstrates the regime's fear of a free and fair political process and its unwillingness to engage with international opinion.

The Secretary-General's visit was an opportunity for the Government of Burma to transform its relationship with the international community, which stands ready to respond positively to real progress. The regime's failure to take that opportunity has only served to isolate it further. We can only hope that we may yet see progress in the coming days; it is not too late. But if it does not come, and if we see an unjust outcome in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trial, the international community will need to follow the Secretary-General's lead and respond robustly. The onus is on the Government to act.

As the Secretary-General has just said, the world is watching. The generals cannot have failed to hear loud and clear the strong messages that the Secretary-General delivered in Rangoon when he addressed ministers and the diplomatic and non-governmental organization community. They can be in no doubt about his disappointment and the disappointment of the international community as a whole.

We urge the regime to engage constructively with the international community to meet our concerns. My Government has stated on many occasions that it remains ready to respond positively to real progress. It is deeply regrettable, therefore, that the regime has yet to take the steps that will allow us to do so.

We remain committed to working with partners in a concerted effort to start a reconciliation process in Burma. For our part, we will continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his good offices mission, and we welcome his ongoing personal efforts to start a reconciliation process in Burma. He remains the international community's best hope of breaking the deadlock.

Each one of us must use whatever influence we have to encourage the regime to engage constructively and to convince them that the objectives that they say they seek — national unity, stability and economic development — are being inhibited by their actions. They must understand that their road map and the elections that they planned will have no credibility if political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, are prevented from playing their full part in the

political process. They must respond positively to the Secretary-General and to the international community, which he represents.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin this statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his presence today and for the briefing that he gave us on his recent visit to Myanmar. My delegation is particularly grateful for the good offices efforts that the Secretary-General has been making in Myanmar, which proceed from his personal concern to help improve the political, economic and social situation in that country — a concern that is shared by a good part of the international community. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement to the Council today. We appreciated its forward-looking content — at least, that is our hope.

The Secretary-General's recent visit to Myanmar, which was his second in a little more than a year, occurred at an opportune time. Indeed, the trip not only enabled the Secretary-General to assess the state of rebuilding following Cyclone Nargis, but also took place in the context of the preparations for the general elections to be held in 2010.

With regard to reconstruction efforts and humanitarian assistance, we welcome the fact that progress has been made, in particular as a result of the cooperation among the Government of Myanmar, the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations through the Tripartite Core Group and the support of donors in the international community. The work of reconstruction has not yet concluded, and efforts to that end must continue.

In the political context, the scene is different and much more complex, and there are many challenges. Myanmar is preparing for its first elections in 20 years, and my delegation believes that many issues must still be resolved if they are to be transparent and fully inclusive of those of all political persuasions in Myanmar.

The forthcoming elections must be aimed at facilitating Myanmar's peaceful transition towards democracy and national reconciliation, placing priority on strengthening the rule of law and protecting human rights. In that connection, the elections must have the support not only of the Government, which bears primary responsibility for organizing them, but also of all registered political parties and of those rebel groups that have demonstrated a readiness to lay down their weapons. We hope that the Government will create the conditions necessary to engage in a genuine dialogue with all ethnic groups and minorities in order to achieve full national reconciliation. This means that all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, must be released as soon as possible. Their participation in the elections will guarantee the credibility of the process and thus its legitimacy. It would therefore have been preferable for Senior General Than Shwe to have allowed the Secretary-General to visit the emblematic Ms. Suu Kyi, who has once again been arrested under conditions which have not yet been fully clarified and is now subject to a new trial.

The Government of Myanmar now has an opportunity to strengthen the process of national reconciliation — thus making it possible for the population to enjoy their civil and political rights, building peace and laying the basis for the country's future economic development. That objective should be pursued with the support of the United Nations through the good offices of the Secretary-General, but also with the support of States in the region, in particular States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, who play a particularly relevant role given their close relations with the Government of Myanmar.

The constant flow of refugees from Myanmar to Thailand reflects the lack of guaranteed protection for the civilian population, as well as the repeated violations of human rights in Myanmar. We therefore urge all regional actors to take necessary measures to ensure that the more than 100,000 refugees have adequate protection and shelter.

We are also concerned with the situation of child soldiers. While we recognize the efforts of the Government in Myanmar in that regard, we feel that they have been insufficient. We urge the Government to ensure the rights of those minors and to cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on measures to demobilize all child solders and reintegrate them into civilian life with their families.

The message sent by the Secretary-General to the people and the Government of Myanmar during his visit was clear. The United Nations and the international community are looking to the present and the future of an independent and sovereign Myanmar and will spare no necessary effort towards dialogue and

cooperation, in order to guarantee the country's political, economic and social development on the path to peace.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and the Permanent Representative of Burma for his statement, to which I listened with great attention. It was essential for the Council to be informed without delay of the results of the mission of the Secretary-General at time when the development of the situation in Burma continues to be a matter of major concern for the international community.

I also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on his courageous, determined and tenacious commitment on this issue. He went to Burma with our support and clearly aware of the difficulties of his mission, in order to convey the expectations of the international community to the Burmese authorities. Unfortunately, as he recalled, they refused to cooperate. Among other things, they did not allow him to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi and refused any substantive dialogue. The authorities thus lost an opportunity to show their desire to undertake genuine national reconciliation and a process of democratization. It is not after the visit of the Secretary-General that one should come before the Council to state that one is ready for dialogue and reconciliation; it was before and during the Secretary-General's visit that that should have been done.

The international community has shown its readiness to work in a constructive manner with Burma in supporting the political process, but also to support the economic and social development of the country with strict respect for its sovereignty and its territorial integrity. That is the message of goodwill that the Secretary-General carried. The hand he held out was ignored.

The authorities' unwillingness to consider the Secretary-General's proposals continues to raise questions about the attitude of the Burmese authorities in general, since the repression of the democratic movement in autumn 2007. In its presidential statement of 11 October 2007 (S/PRST/2007/37), the Council set forth clear and precise expectations unanimously. Those demands were reaffirmed in May 2008 and May 2009.

Almost two years after they were first expressed, where do we stand in terms of their achievement? The first expectation was the timely release of all political prisoners. What have we seen? First, the number of those prisoners has continued to increase, in spite of a handful of releases. New promises have been made, including today, with respect to the release of some, but not all prisoners. Here we recall that the demands of the Council were for the release of all political prisoners.

Next, although the appeal for the release of political prisoners concerned, of course, Ms. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who continues to be detained since 2003, instead of freeing her the authorities arrested her in May and launched a political trial against her without any justification, to the consternation of the rest of the world, including the friends of Burma. The fact that the announcement of the verdict is continually being delayed clearly demonstrates the embarrassment of a regime at the weakness of the so-called charges against the head of the opposition and — as my colleague from Great Britain recalled — the only political leader in Burma to have won an election democratically.

The second demand of the Council was for the launch of a genuine dialogue among the Government, Ms. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the other concerned parties and ethnic groups, with a view to inclusive national reconciliation. Instead of initiating that dialogue, the authorities chose a policy of fait accompli, by unilaterally implementing a so-called road map. That strategy led to increased polarization within the country.

The third demand of the Security Council bore on cooperation with the United Nations. After several visits by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari — whose efforts and tenacity I commend — the Secretary-General went to Burma to offer assistance in the political, economic and humanitarian areas. No response was given to his suggestions, which were made in a constructive spirit.

The Security Council has shown great patience with respect to those various demands. We are ready to actively support change, howsoever gradual, in the right direction. It must be noted that not only have the Burmese authorities done nothing to respond to the demands of the Council, but that, over the past few months, they have taken decisions that run directly counter to those demands.

We all know that the Burmese crisis goes beyond the political dimension. The country is facing enormous economic, social and governance challenges. A response to the needs of the population in all of those areas is urgently needed.

The European Union is a major actor in humanitarian and development assistance. It has continually shown its readiness to revise its common position as the situation evolves. The onset of a genuine political process leading to national reconciliation continues, however, to be a necessary precondition to positive momentum in all areas. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is an essential and irreplaceable actor in that process. Her detention is intolerable, illegal and an obstacle to dialogue. Without the prior liberation of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, any electoral process would be nothing but a parody of democracy aimed at legitimizing a fait accompli.

The current impasse is not a reason for the Council to sit back and do nothing and we agree with the Secretary-General on that point. France also encourages the Special Adviser to continue his efforts; however, those efforts can be successful only if the international community, in particular regional actors, works actively in favour of change. The Security Council must continue to follow the situation and to clearly remind the Burmese authorities of the need to implement the demands made of them. The Council must respond firmly if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is condemned.

We are committed to unity in the Council. However, the price of unity must not be inaction. We cannot risk further deterioration of the situation, which could contribute to instability in the country and the entire region.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to express Japan's deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for his important statement to the Security Council today on his recent visit to Myanmar. We are also grateful to the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

At the outset, I would like to stress how firmly Japan supports the good offices effort of the Secretary-General, assisted by Special Adviser Gambari. As a country of the region, Japan has followed the situation in Myanmar with great interest and concern. Based on our long-standing excellent bilateral relationship, we are maintaining a close dialogue with the Government of Myanmar to assist and support the good offices efforts of the Secretary-General and Mr. Gambari.

The Government of Myanmar has been implementing a seven-step road map for democratization. With general elections scheduled for next year, this is a crucial stage in the democratization process. The attention of the international community has recently been focused on the situation surrounding the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. It is therefore important and timely for the Secretary-General to visit Myanmar to personally convey the concerns of the international community and urge the leadership to make the democratic process open, inclusive and internationally credible.

During his visit, the Secretary-General met with Senior General Than Shwe on two occasions. He called for the early release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the resumption of substantive dialogue between the Government and all political parties, the holding of inclusive, internationally credible elections in 2010, an improvement in the human rights situation, national reconciliation and the establishment of a national economic forum.

We are certainly disappointed that the Government of Myanmar did not agree to the Secretary-General's request to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. However, we recognize that the Secretary-General's visit as a whole was very useful and necessary. We approve of his decision to make the visit. The Secretary-General is one of the very few political leaders who can directly convey the concerns of the international community to the country's highest leadership. We welcome the effort of the Secretary-General to unequivocally convey to the top leaders all the points of common concern shared by all of us.

As reported in the Council today, the Secretary-General had a full, detailed and substantive exchange of views with the leadership on the concrete steps we would like it to take. He also expressed to the leaders the support of the United Nations for Myanmar's efforts. It was also significant that the Secretary-General could meet all political parties, including the National League for Democracy and ceasefire groups, and make a very candid public address in Yangon.

Although there has been no immediate response to other points addressed by the Secretary-General, we hope that the Myanmar authorities will seriously consider all the issues and concerns of the international

community and come up with a positive response in due course. We share the expectations expressed by the Secretary-General that the Myanmar Government should match deeds to its words of promise to cooperate with the United Nations. We should closely monitor how the Myanmar Government follows up the outcome of the Secretary-General's visit.

With regard to the case of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Japan has conveyed its deep concern to Myanmar's authorities at a high level. We have appealed to them to take appropriate and lenient actions. Once there are positive moves by the Myanmar authorities, it will be important for us to respond positively with concrete steps on our part, as confirmed by G-8 leaders at the summit meeting in L'Aquila last week.

The good offices effort of the Secretary-General does not end with this one visit. Japan will continue to support further good offices efforts by the United Nations. At the same time, we appeal to the Myanmar Government to take positive steps to advance the democratic process in an all-inclusive manner.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): I, too, should like to offer a particular word of thanks to the Secretary-General. The United States joins other Council members in reiterating our strong support for him and his good offices mission, as well as for his Special Adviser, Ibrahim Gambari. We appreciate the Secretary-General's briefing today. We are especially grateful that he was able to convey critical messages directly to the Burmese Government. We also appreciate the presence today of the Permanent Representative of Burma. We hope that the Burmese Government will implement all of the Secretary-General's recommendations.

We note that the Secretary-General was able to meet with Senior General Than Shwe, several members of the National League for Democracy's central executive committee and representatives of other registered political parties. But we are very disappointed that Burmese authorities refused the Secretary-General's request to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. By turning down that simple, straightforward request, the Burmese Government missed a critical opportunity, in the words of the Secretary-General, to show its commitment to a new era of political openness.

We await the regime's response to the important challenges that the Secretary-General presented to it during his visit. If the authorities fail to credibly address those challenges, they will miss yet another chance to make meaningful progress on concerns repeatedly uttered by the Council. The path the authorities are pursuing leads to neither democracy nor stability. It is the Burmese people who will suffer further if this opportunity to change course is not taken.

As 2010 approaches, the Government has repeatedly assured us that next year's elections will be free and fair. But there can be no free and fair elections while key leaders of Burma's democratic opposition, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and more than 2,000 other political prisoners, languish in Burma's prisons. We do not seek to dictate Burma's political future. We merely seek to ensure that the will of all the Burmese people can be heard and respected.

The authorities are clearly not respecting that popular will by putting the leader of the country's democratic opposition on trial for spurious charges of violating a house arrest that was illegitimate to begin with. We are deeply concerned about those proceedings. We call on the regime to cease its actions against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and to free her immediately and unconditionally.

We are also troubled that the authorities continue to resist addressing the grave human rights challenges facing the country. For example, recent attacks by the Burmese army and its proxies have forced more than 3,000 ethnic Karen to flee across the border into Thailand. That violence against ethnic minorities destabilizes the area around the international border and raises a red flag about the Government's treatment of Burma's ethnic groups. National reconciliation can never be achieved so long as the army continues to attack citizens of its own country. Such problems cannot be resolved by imposing plans on the citizens of Burma that lack democratic legitimacy. A democratic transition to legitimate civilian rule can be achieved only through genuine dialogue and a vision for the future that is shared by all, including the democratic opposition and all ethnic groups.

We welcome the progress that has been made in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta after the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis, and we recognize the crucial contribution that the Tripartite Core Group has made to

facilitate that progress. We strongly support the Secretary-General's request to grant outstanding visas to humanitarian aid workers and to broaden humanitarian support beyond the Delta. Advancement towards democracy and stability cannot be made when citizens are struggling to survive.

The Secretary-General has called for immediate action from the Burmese Government to avoid more wasted lives, lost opportunities and prolonged isolation. We could not agree more. The Secretary-General has noted that Burma cannot face its many challenges alone. Burma's generals should understand that those of us around this table are ready to help Burma ensure its future stability and restore its past prosperity. The international community has shown that it is willing to help the people of Burma. Now it is up to the Burmese authorities to show they are ready to do the same.

The Burmese Government has called cooperation with the United Nations the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. The Secretary-General echoed this statement in his recent speech. Now is the time for Burma to match its words with deeds. We strongly encourage the authorities to seize this opportunity to engage credibly with the international community. When Burma demonstrates its willingness to respond to the international community's demands and to commit to genuine progress towards reform, the United States stands ready to respond.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for joining us here today, for the briefing he gave us today and, above all, for his active engagement on Myanmar as well as for that of his Special Adviser, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. Allow me to also acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Myanmar and let me assure him that we have listened to his statement very attentively.

It was a courageous decision, on the part of the Secretary-General, to visit Myanmar and to seek a dialogue with both the Myanmar Government and the opposition. It has my country's full support. Austria strongly welcomes his leadership in conveying the concerns and messages of the international community to the Government and in particular to Senior General Than Shwe. Austria will continue to firmly support the United Nations good offices mission and his personal engagement.

Austria notes with great concern that, in the course of the past year, the human rights situation in Myanmar has deteriorated significantly. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained as a consequence of an alleged breach of her house arrest — an arrest that, according to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, was in violation not only of international law but also of national Myanmar law. Moreover, in recent weeks, intensified fighting in the East of the country has forced thousands of civilians to flee to neighbouring States.

All of these developments do not bode well for Myanmar's plans for a peaceful transition to democracy. We therefore believe that the visit by the Secretary-General was indeed very timely and important. All the areas that he covered during his visit — the release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the resumption of a substantive dialogue with a clear time frame, the criteria for free and fair elections, national development and humanitarian assistance, especially the swift issuance of visas — are of great relevance to Myanmar and, as the Secretary-General highlighted in his speech in Yangon, they are also interconnected. As has been pointed out by the Secretary-General, neither peace nor development can thrive without democracy and respect for human rights.

Like others, Austria is clearly disappointed by the Government's decision to deny the Secretary-General a meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We share his view that the Government missed an important opportunity.

The fate of the political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will evidently be of great relevance to the credibility of the elections in 2010 and their national and international perception of being free and fair. We urge the Government of Myanmar to immediately and unconditionally release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners and detainees.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the high level of poverty in Myanmar and the suffering of its people. The effective cooperation among the Government of Myanmar, the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, undertaken in the framework of the Tripartite Core Group in response to Cyclone Nargis, has clearly demonstrated the value of engagement over isolation. We strongly commend these efforts and hope that this spirit of openness will

also be applied in the future to practical issues related to humanitarian assistance — namely, full and unimpeded humanitarian access — development cooperation and the proposed establishment of a national economic forum.

Given the fact that opium production in the territory of Myanmar is still the second highest in the world, the active promotion of alternative development activities, pursued by the Government of Myanmar with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime country office, could help redress this situation.

In its Council conclusions of 27 April, the European Union recalled its important and growing role as a donor to the country and its readiness to further increase its assistance to the people of Myanmar. However, genuine positive steps on the basis of the Secretary-General's proposals will be necessary in order to enable the European Union and other donors to unleash the full potential of their cooperation with the country.

In conclusion, allow me to stress that Austria now hopes that the Myanmar Government will act on the Secretary-General's requests and proposals. We are convinced that this would be in the best interests of the country and its people. We wish to encourage the Myanmar authorities to cooperate closely and constructively with the Secretary-General and Special Adviser Ibrahim Gambari in the follow-up to his visit.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): I wish to join other Council members in thanking the Secretary-General for his descriptive briefing on his Myanmar visit 10 days ago. We are particularly appreciative of and grateful for the Secretary-General's personal efforts and commitment in making this visit, given his very tight schedule. I also thank Ambassador Than Swe, Permanent Representative of Myanmar, for his statement.

It is our view that the visit was timely and necessary, given the overall situation in Myanmar at this juncture. In reality, it has further confirmed the role of the United Nations, represented by the Secretary-General, as a key mediator and its commitment to helping the Government and people of Myanmar with a broad-based, forward-looking package.

As we have learned directly from the Secretary-General, all activities scheduled for the visit except one were realized. He had two meetings with Senior General Than Shwe and several meetings with high-level Government officials, at which he straightforwardly raised his views and recommendations on the current situation. He also had a frank exchange of views with leaders of 10 registered political parties, including a separate private meeting with the National League for Democracy and representatives of ceasefire groups. In particular, he met with and made public critical comments to a large audience comprised of over 300 participants from non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and the diplomatic corps, which is yet another sign of Myanmar authorities' continued respect for the Secretary-General and his opinion.

We regret but understand from the local legal perspective the Secretary-General's inability to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We regard the Secretary-General's meeting with Tripartite Core Group as very important, for it again gives added value to the successful cooperation between the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Government of Myanmar.

While sharing the common wish to see faster and more tangible progress in all fields of life in Myanmar, we take positive note of the decision by the Government of Myanmar to grant amnesty to prisoners and enable them to participate in next year's elections, which we hope will be free, fair and inclusive, as a first concrete measure in follow-up to the Secretary-General's visit.

At the same time, taking into account the complex situation of Myanmar as a country emerging from years of, and still suffering from, political tension, economic underdevelopment and disastrous natural calamities, we believe that the visit has proved to be a meaningful step in a process needed for Myanmar to become a peaceful, stable and prosperous country. In this process, it is the people of Myanmar who will determine their own destiny. The assistance of the international community and the United Nations is extremely important and will be effective when it is based on the engagement of and cooperation with the Government and the people of Myanmar, as has been the case, particularly in the present context of the country's seven-step road map towards democracy and national reconciliation.

As stated on many occasions, Viet Nam supports a comprehensive approach in helping to address the

root causes of the challenges that Myanmar is facing, which lie in poverty and economic underdevelopment. In that connection, the establishment of a national economic forum, with a focus on agriculture, will be pivotal. For that to be realized fruitfully, we believe that United Nations agencies and donors should and could play a more active role.

Finally, as a country in the region with a high stake in seeing peace, stability and development promoted in Myanmar, Viet Nam wishes to reaffirm its continued support for the Secretary-General's good offices and all other efforts conducive to the national reconciliation and democratization process in that country. In ways that we deem appropriate and productive, we will continue to be a constructive part of that process.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his substantive briefing on his recent trip. We listened closely to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar.

In our view, the Secretary-General's visit was timely and necessary. The programme of work was extremely full: the Secretary-General met twice with the head of State, and met also with the Prime Minister, representatives of political parties, including the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), and armed ethnic-minority groups. The Secretary-General personally visited areas that were affected by last year's destructive natural disaster. We note the constructive spirit displayed by the Myanmar authorities in permitting the Secretary-General to speak before the broader Myanmar public and the press.

He had hoped to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, representing the NLD. We would observe that that should not be the sole criterion on which his visit is judged. He openly and directly recalled to the authorities and the country's highest leaders the importance of democracy in Myanmar and reaffirmed the readiness of the international community to provide comprehensive assistance to help overcome urgent problems. We welcome the multidimensional nature of the Secretary-General's efforts, which encompass the socio-economic and humanitarian aspects of cooperation with Myanmar.

The good offices mission is a process. It is clear that many of the questions set out by the Secretary-General at Nay Pyi Taw during his trip cannot be resolved immediately. Time and patience are needed. We are counting on the constructive efforts of Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar.

Myanmar is now preparing for general parliamentary elections, to be held in 2010; this is the most recent stage in the road map of the democratic transition. The country's highest leadership reassured the Secretary-General that the upcoming elections would be free and fair and that all political parties, including the National League for Democracy, would be able to participate. We expect those reassurances to be backed up by concrete measures. We welcome the readiness expressed by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to cooperate with the United Nations and the international community in the organization of the elections and in a number of other spheres.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his active personal role in carrying out his mission of good offices. That mission has provided an important and effective channel of communication between the Security Council, the United Nations and Myanmar. The Russian Federation will continue to provide that mission with needed assistance.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): I too would like to join the Secretary-General for briefing the Council and providing us with a first-hand account of his recent trip to Myanmar. Croatia commends the Secretary-General for the continued personal leadership he has demonstrated on this issue. Fully cognizant of the challenges faced by the Secretary-General in deciding whether to visit Myanmar, Croatia welcomes the visit, which was aimed at pressing the Myanmar Government to release political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and to hold free and fair elections.

Croatia values the Secretary-General's frank assessment of the outcome of his meetings with senior members of Myanmar's leadership. We were particularly interested also to learn of the Secretary-General's impressions drawn from his meeting with representatives of ethnic minority groups and representatives and leaders of several political parties, including members of the National League for Democracy, as well as his impressions regarding the status of humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in the Irrawaddy delta since his first visit, in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. We were encouraged to hear about the good cooperation among the Government of Myanmar,

the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Croatia remains deeply concerned about recent events in Myanmar concerning political prisoners and the regime's treatment of ethnic minorities, in violation of international humanitarian law, alongside its continuing lack of respect for the basic human rights of its population. In that respect, Croatia shares the international community's increasing sense of frustration with the Myanmar authorities' continuing political blockage of international efforts to bring about substantive progress towards an inclusive process of democratization in the run-up to the 2010 elections.

Given the complexity of the political situation in Myanmar, which has been further complicated by the ongoing trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, Croatia deeply appreciates the good offices of the Secretary-General in conveying, in unequivocal terms, the fundamental concerns of the international community directly to Senior General Than Shwe and other senior officials. We also believe that the visit serves another important purpose: in laying out his vision for Myanmar in his speech of 4 July, the Secretary-General also sent a crucial message from the international community that Myanmar has a choice about how to proceed. National ownership of the political process is not in question here, and primary responsibility for its progress lies with the Myanmar authorities and the choices they wish to make.

It is deeply regrettable, therefore, that Myanmar's leaders chose not to use the unique opportunity of the Secretary-General's visit to demonstrate any level of commitment to the promotion of genuine democratic reform. Indeed, their refusal to allow the Secretary-General to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi is of great concern to us, as was the leadership's resistance to many of the Secretary-General's proposals. We strongly urge the Myanmar authorities to utilize the Secretary-General's good offices and begin to show some readiness to cooperate, by translating into actions the assurances they gave during the visit that they would make the 2010 elections credible by releasing all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as resuming a general process of dialogue and national reconciliation.

Croatia stands ready, along with the rest of the international community, to continue to help the people of Myanmar achieve their aspirations to a democratic and prosperous future. In that respect, Croatia reiterates its support for the continued important role the Secretary-General must play in Myanmar through his good offices mission and through the work of his Special Envoy, Ibrahim Gambari.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Ambassador U Than Swe, for his statement.

China places high value on the Secretary-General's visit to Myanmar in early July. We greatly appreciate the efforts he has made since he assumed his post to promote the democratic process and national reconciliation in Myanmar. We believe that his visit was very valuable and brought great influence to bear. China appreciates the high-level reception accorded to the Secretary-General by Myanmar and is encouraged by the determination expressed by Myanmar to promote the democratic process and actively cooperate with the United Nations.

We note that some media and certain countries are not happy with the fact that the Secretary-General did not meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In our view, the Secretary-General met with many people during his visit; whether or not he met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should not be used as a criterion to measure the success of his visit.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was unfortunately involved in a legal proceeding. In order to maintain impartiality in the judicial process, the Myanmar side did not make the arrangements for the Secretary-General to meet with her, which is totally understandable. The United Nations should respect the jurisdiction of its Member States.

We have time and again stressed that the Secretary-General's good offices are a process and that his visit was part of the good offices mandate. During his visit, the Secretary-General had in-depth dialogues with the top leaders of Myanmar, directly conveyed to them the concern of the international community on the question of Myanmar, and enhanced mutual trust with that country. That will play an important role in encouraging the Myanmar side to maintain the current momentum and promote the democratic process according to the established plan.

The Secretary-General also had extensive contacts with the civil society of Myanmar and exerted a positive influence on its members. All of these developments fully indicate that the visit of the Secretary-General is of positive and important significance.

In recent years, the Secretary-General has actively conducted good offices in Myanmar, as mandated by the General Assembly. His unremitting efforts and the positive outcome achieved thereby deserve an objective and fair assessment by the international community. Up to 2006, when Mr. Gambari made his first visit to the country at the request of the Secretary-General, Myanmar had taken 14 years to complete the first step of the seven-step road map. Next year, however, it will finish the fifth step by holding the first general elections in 20 years. These achievements would not have been possible without the Secretary-General's good offices and Myanmar's own efforts.

Taking into account Myanmar's historical evolution and the political reality in the country, the aforementioned progress was no easy gain. It is unfair to turn a blind eye to the progress that Myanmar has made or to continuously focus on picking at its Government. The international community should make a balanced assessment of the efforts Myanmar has made, lend its Government more encouragement and assistance, and treat it with less arrogance and prejudice.

As an Asian country and Myanmar's close neighbour, China fully understands the difficulties facing the people and the Government of Myanmar. Myanmar is plagued by a myriad of problems, not just one problem concerning a single individual. As a least developed country, while Myanmar is self-sufficient agriculturally, the majority of its people have yet to share the dividends of industrialization. The biggest problem for Myanmar is therefore development.

As Myanmar is a multi-ethnic nation, national reconciliation faces a serious challenge there, with armed groups inside its territory yet to sign peace agreements with the Government. The greatest challenge for Myanmar is therefore achieving national unity and social stability.

As both an old country with a long history of civilization and a new one that emerged from the Second World War after shaking off colonial rule, Myanmar's democratic process and system of governance are faced with many problems. Like many other developing countries, Myanmar's problems can only be gradually addressed in the process of its economic and social development.

It is obvious that Myanmar's problems cannot be solved exclusively through Western-style problem-solving. We hope that the Government of Myanmar will implement the seven-step road map of its democratic process with due seriousness and make full preparations for the general elections scheduled next year. We hope that the Government of Myanmar will engage in steady reform and lead its people towards greater economic achievements. We also hope that the international community will make an objective and fair assessment of its multifaceted problems and lend a helping hand to Myanmar. It is also our hope that the countries concerned will lift their sanctions against Myanmar so as to provide the people of that country with a fair and enabling environment for its economic development.

China supports Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Gambari in their continued good offices. It is our sincere hope that the Secretary-General's good offices will help Myanmar to achieve domestic stability and national reconciliation, and that the United Nations will play a constructive role in helping the country to address its economic, social, humanitarian and human rights issues. China has been and will be helping the Government of Myanmar in its efforts to address its problems in a responsible and constructive manner, but we believe that events inside Myanmar are the internal affairs of Myanmar itself and should be handled by its own Government and people through consultations.

The situation in Myanmar poses no threat to international or regional peace or security. China has explicitly opposed the inclusion of the question of Myanmar on the Security Council's agenda, and we are against the policy of isolating and sanctioning Myanmar. China's position on this matter remains unchanged.

As Myanmar's friendly neighbour, China will always provide assistance to the people and the Government of that country within its capabilities. We hope that the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other countries of the region will work together to help Myanmar address its difficulties.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): I would like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his extensive briefing concerning his recent visit to Myanmar on 3 and 4 July 2009. This second visit of the Secretary-General in just over a year was again timely, and we hope that it will lead to concrete examples of cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

Turkey attaches great importance to national reconciliation and the protection of human rights in Myanmar. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's good offices mission in this direction, as mandated by the General Assembly, as well as the efforts of his Special Adviser, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari.

Myanmar has undergone very tough times in the past two years, and we all remember the disastrous consequences of Cyclone Nargis. This tragedy showed the resilience of the people of Myanmar, and we are now happy to hear from the Secretary-General that the rebuilding efforts are gradually bearing fruit as a result of effective cooperation between the United Nations, the Government of Myanmar and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We are also pleased to hear of some other positive developments in the political and economic domains, such as the ceasefire agreements between the Government and armed groups, as well as the facilitation of external trade and investment.

Yet, we would want to see more substantive and tangible progress in the protection of human rights and political freedoms. Echoing the words of the Secretary-General at the end of his visit to Yangon, peace, development and human rights are closely interrelated in all countries, and Myanmar is no exception.

In this regard, the elections to be held in 2010 will be a critical test. These elections, including developments in the pre-election period, ought to be free and fair. All political parties should be allowed to campaign for and participate in these elections freely. We noted with interest the reassurances provided by the Myanmar leadership to that end. We would now like to see that commitment followed up by concrete steps. Furthermore, the Government of Myanmar should establish the necessary conditions for national reconciliation through an inclusive process with the full participation of all political parties and groups.

This brings me to the issue of the release of all political prisoners, and in particular to the situation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. As a leading opposition figure, it is unfortunate that Ms. Suu Kyi has spent 13 years under house arrest. In this context, and even more significantly, her recent imprisonment just a few weeks before she was bound to be released of house arrest raises yet again important questions that need to be elucidated. In this regard, the refusal of the Myanmar Government to allow the Secretary-General to visit Ms. Suu Kyi is certainly not a welcome development.

However, irrespective of the individual cases, we believe that it is high time that the Government of Myanmar heed the repeated appeals of the Security Council and release all political prisoners. This is indeed essential to the establishment of a political environment conducive to dialogue, conciliation and mutual respect leading to free and fair elections, the results of which have to be respected and honoured by all.

We sincerely hope that all parties, and primarily the Government, will seize the historic opportunity presented by the 2010 elections in order to embark upon an irreversible path towards national reconciliation and peace. The Secretary-General has declared that the United Nations could and would assist Myanmar in this process, and Turkey supports the United Nations efforts in this direction.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and to commend his good offices efforts to promote stability and national reconciliation in Myanmar. We stress our support for his personal work and that of his Special Adviser, Mr. Gambari.

We also extend our thanks to the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

We welcome the Secretary-General's visit to Myanmar and his talks with the Government and other parties on that occasion. At the same time, we note his inability to meet with the opposition leader, Ms. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We regret that failure, despite our understanding of the position of the Myanmar authorities, as outlined by the Permanent Representative of that country earlier in this meeting.

We fully understand that the Secretary-General's personal efforts and good offices, exercised through Mr. Gambari, have led to real movement and positive developments. While slow, such developments — first among which is the commitment of the Myanmar authorities to pursue their follow-up of the seven-step road map and, at the appropriate moment, to enact a law to regulate the 2010 elections — augur well for real progress. We hope that these efforts will advance the democratic process and achieve a lasting solution to all Myanmar's problems.

We believe that dialogue with the Myanmar authorities must be pursued in order to encourage them to achieve the aims we all support and aspire to, above all the release of political prisoners and detainees, continued dialogue among the various parties, and the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to the organization of elections, the promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights.

We hope that the Myanmar authorities will continue to cooperate with the United Nations and the international community in order to ensure national reconciliation, lay the foundations for the full participation of all political actors in the 2010 elections, and establish stability throughout the country. We believe that coordination between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is also critical to achieving tangible and timely results.

In previous statements to the Council, my country has stressed that issues relating to the internal affairs of States must be addressed through consultation and constructive dialogue between the Government and political actors involved, with the assistance of the international community. We reiterate that point of view and commend the role played by ASEAN, its support for the good offices of the United Nations and its assistance to the people of Myanmar in achieving national reconciliation in their country. We hope that Myanmar will soon achieve political and economic stability, development and national reconciliation, and that its people will live in peace.

We emphasize that the future of Myanmar is exclusively in the hands of its people, who must work together to ensure that it will be a prosperous one.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing this morning. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

We believe that the Secretary-General's timely visit to Myanmar represented an important milestone in his good offices efforts in that country. Previous gestures — in particular, the repeated visits undertaken by Mr. Gambari — have embodied the international community's response. The Secretary-General's messages, we believe, have been especially apposite and address the international community's concerns. A response to these messages would lend new impetus to a process that should ultimately lead to the normalization of national life and development in Myanmar.

In that regard, Costa Rica is grateful for the Secretary-General's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations, but regrets the behaviour of the Government of Myanmar. We can neither claim that the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would be the sole benchmark of change within the Government, nor ignore the fact that the Nobel Peace Prize laureate is a disturbing symbol of the Government of Myanmar's oppressive response. Furthermore, the constant rise in the number of political prisoners runs counter to the continual demands of the international community.

While Costa Rica believes that there must be a gradual shift from sanctions and isolation towards a model of greater participation and international cooperation that seeks to open doors, build bridges and create opportunities for inclusive dialogue, reconciliation and democracy, we also believe that such a shift will depend on whether the Government of Myanmar works actively to increase the international community's confidence in its political plans, particularly in the areas highlighted by the Secretary-General.

A lasting peace and economic development in Myanmar will depend on participation and joint action by all social sectors without exclusion. Costa Rica welcomes the statement by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar that his Government places priority on the transfer of power to a civilian Government after next year's elections. However, it must be made clear that such a transfer will be legitimate domestically and internationally only if it is the result of a process that respects the rights of all and provides guarantees for participation by all.

The day will come when power cannot be based on the repression and denial of rights. Repression must

be ended. Costa Rica calls for the release of all political prisoners and for the restoration of all rights to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We believe that those are the urgent steps required in order to begin a vigorous process of national reconciliation leading to legitimate elections next year. Those are basic prerequisites for future development.

I conclude by expressing appreciation for the Secretary-General's concern that there be greater access for humanitarian assistance, which continues to be sorely needed. My delegation thanks him for his efforts.

Mr. Koudougou (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): We should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing following his visit to Myanmar, the second of its kind within a year, to better see first-hand the development of the socio-political and humanitarian situation on the ground and to jump-start the reconciliation and democratization process. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

We welcome the Secretary-General's meeting with the main political and national actors, particularly General Than Shwe, and development partners, including the diplomatic corps and non-governmental organizations. However, we regret that it was not possible for him to meet with the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

In the political area, we should like to urge the Government of Myanmar to continue the release of political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, to establish ongoing dialogue with all political actors, and to create an environment conducive to the holding of pluralistic, free and transparent elections in 2010, which is a necessary element for the return of lasting stability, peace and development to the country.

Given the importance of the elections, we should like to emphasize that it will be essential to adopt in the near future appropriate legislation establishing a competent structure for organizing and managing the elections and, when the time comes, to accept the assistance of the international community, in particular the United Nations. We are encouraged by the commitment of Myanmar's authorities in that regard, as expressed earlier by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar.

In the humanitarian area, my delegation welcomes the meeting between the Secretary-General and the Tripartite Core Group, which is responsible for rebuilding the areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis. We welcome the progress made in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta and, given the challenges yet to be addressed, we request the Government to further facilitate humanitarian access to those areas so that the population can receive the assistance needed to improve their living conditions.

We call on the Government to facilitate the establishment of the national economic forum by focusing on priority sectors, such as agriculture and income-producing activities, that could improve the population's living conditions. We should like to encourage the armed groups that have chosen to observe the ceasefire to honour their obligations, including the cessation of all recruitment and use of children, and we urge other groups that have not yet done so to join the process.

My delegation would like to recall that the path towards national reconciliation, peace and lasting development is long and requires the firm and substantial commitment of all national actors and the assistance of the international community. That is why we call on the Government to take all appropriate measures to find a lasting consensus solution to the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General. Ultimately, it is primarily up to the people of Myanmar as a whole to overcome the obstacles to building a prosperous nation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our thanks and encouragement to the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser for their efforts to help Myanmar emerge from the impasse. We also call on the other countries of the region, particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to maintain their spirit of solidarity towards Myanmar.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Uganda.

I wish to salute the Secretary-General for his briefing and to thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar for his statement.

As the Government of Myanmar pursues its seven-stage road map to democracy, stage five — which relates to next year's elections — is important, as the elections will contribute significantly to the

democratization process in the country. We urge the Government of Myanmar to ensure that the electoral process is free, fair, transparent and inclusive and that all sectors of Myanmar society fully participate.

We call on the Government and on all parties to pursue dialogue and reconciliation. In that regard, we call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.